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Essays in Philosophy
MODERN

Stanley Rosen

Edited and with an Introduction by Martin Black

St. Augustine's Press
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"Memory and Human Time" appeared in *The Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 19 (2004), pp. 85–101.

Introduction

Martin Black

This is the second of two volumes of philosophical essays by Stanley Rosen to be published by St. Augustine's Press. As in the first volume, the essays were selected from articles and chapters, as well as from unpublished lectures, composed over the last five decades. Details of prior publication are given in the Acknowledgements. The following Introduction contains some orientating remarks on Rosen's work on modern philosophy for readers relatively new to his writings. It supplements the more extended Introduction to Rosen's thought and his study of ancient philosophy given in the first volume.

Rosen's engagement with modern philosophy took place when one of the main currents of thought was announcing that the modern age had come to an end and been superseded by the postmodern. This premature declaration was accompanied by others unregretfully informing us of the death of human nature, reason, and philosophy. These gestures were extreme versions of the widespread realization that the success of the Enlightenment had been partial at best. The promise that the totality of human knowledge would be placed on a new and secure footing had paid off spectacularly well in the so-called natural sciences; but the tenor of everyday life, let alone the disasters of the twentieth century, seemed to provide sufficient evidence that there had been no commensurable progress in the political or moral knowledge by which we might deploy our new powers. Yet the other main current of professional philosophy, by a sort of mass preterition, remained intent upon describing human knowledge and experience by means of increasingly narrow conceptions of philosophical analysis. The usual consequence of technical narrowness produced the same result as a postmodernism which denied its own reasonableness: the arbitrary proliferation of

incompatible systems, and an increasing detachment of academic philosophy from the larger questions of human life.

The essays that follow provide an array of approaches into Rosen's complex and profound response to the crisis of modernity. Without attempting to anticipate the reader's experience, two broad aspects of that approach might be suggested. First, Rosen argues that postmodernism is not a repudiation but a dissolute continuation of modernity, one that brings out the structural defects in the thought of the early modern philosophers. Second, the success of the Enlightenment on its own terms, the attempt both to mathematicize life and subject it to the political equivalent of such rationalization, would in fact be as effective in eliminating human nature and philosophy as its failure. Thus, Rosen wishes to honor the nobility of the aspiration to enlightenment, while resisting both the reduction of reason to formal cognition and the rejection of rationality altogether.

Some essential aspects of Rosen's engagement with modern thought are on view in the first chapter of this volume, "Are We Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On? Against Reductionism." This essay, which surely qualifies as one of the more eccentric and philosophical inaugural lectures in the philosophy of science, also constitutes one of the best, and most concise and accessible, formulations of Rosen's philosophical outlook that we possess.[1] Rosen begins with poetry, whose power is to make vivid our lived experience. However, the poets' reflection upon and their truthful representation of the ephemerality of our experience has the consequence that poetry, in its classical form, makes life seem a dream, and one from which one cannot wake. In its post-classical form, poetry can make of life a dreamlike image of the true life, whether the latter is to be found in another world or at the end of history. In both of these cases ordinary experience seems to lose its genuineness. Yet philosophical reflection too seems to abstract us from our experience, rendering life a phantom image of the eternal principles it seeks. The essay explores these two main elements in reflective or philosophical thought, which here as often Rosen denotes the mathematical and the poetic.

Rosen contends that Plato is the model of philosophy as the aspiration to understand the whole of life without reducing it either to

a specious mathematical entity or to a poetic myth. Because human life does not have a structure, Plato self-consciously deploys poetry and myth to provide images of the soul, which is the original that is irreducible to anything else. Plato is thus compelled to take as an ally the Homer whom he has Socrates describe in the *Theaetetus* as the general of the army of poets and thinkers who hold that nothing ever truly *is*, or is one, or that there is no fundament, only flux. But poetry in Plato is regulated by the inference we may make from the evident stability of everyday life, from our ability to fail to recognize and so our ability to recognize correctly the unified things we experience, and to recognize ourselves as unified actors. From this perspective, Plato's myths are more accurate than the pseudo-scientific epistemology of modern philosophy. The myths comprehend that aspect of the soul which is absent from rational discourse because, as the formless openness to the pre-discursive forms of things, it is the ground of rational discourse.

Plato's myths of the soul, on the one hand, and modern ontology and epistemology, on the other, may now be seen as competing poetic images of our experience. Rosen does not argue that there has been only philosophical decline since Plato, but he does suggest that we admit that there has been a disproportionate development first of the mathematical and then the poetic mode of reflection in separation from each other. To state this point very briefly, the early modern philosophers and scientists took mathematics as the paradigm of knowledge, which reduces what is known to knowable or mathematical structure. But significance does not have a formal structure. If what is genuinely knowable is what genuinely is, then ultimately the soul and its experiences—its apprehension of what is better and worse in any of the full variety of possible senses of those words—are demoted to the status of epiphenomena. Evidence for this demotion or homogenization is to be seen in the employment of the very term "naturalism" to denote a science that denies the status of a distinct genus to human nature. Further, acceptance of the proposition that we know only what we make seems to entail that the apparently eternal structure of knowledge is an artifact, one produced by the will and imagination without regulation by

the intellect. Thus does mathematics gives way to poetry, or science to history. To reduce the significance of life either to the silence of matter obeying natural laws or to the inarticulate noise of history in effect eliminates meaningful discourse or philosophy.

Rosen does, therefore, suggest that the development of our current paradigm of philosophizing has reached a stage of exhaustion. He calls for a new beginning, or a renewed effort, and in this essay he recommends in particular the examination of the origination of philosophy in ordinary experience, as well as the reconsideration of the central questions of the character of form, thought, and dialectic. This philosophical prospect is not informed by a simple preference for the ancients over the moderns.[2] As Chapter Six, "Negation and Dialectic," and Chapter Nine, "Freedom and Reason," attest, there are some issues that can be elucidated only by making use of the moderns in thinking through problems raised but not resolved by the ancients because they are a challenge to rationality itself.

Rosen argues that philosophy is a way of life, not a doctrine that can be captured by technical concepts, but that this alone is not a sufficient justification of reason. On this point Rosen judges that the recourse his great and admired teacher, Leo Strauss, makes to the practical or the political is inadequate to meet the attacks of late moderns such as Nietzsche and Heidegger. Rosen makes this claim in Chapter Twelve, in his review of a book by Catherine Zuckert, another student of Strauss: *qua* philosopher one must account for the intelligible structure of the whole. In Rosen's view the last great philosopher who attempted the comprehensive task of the philosopher was Hegel, but Rosen criticizes Hegel for trying to conceptualize life. Several of the issues involved in thinking through the consequences of the Enlightenment provided by the thought of Hegel and Rosen's other essential teacher, Alexandre Kojève, are discussed in Chapters Four, Five, and Twenty-one.

The two sides of these criticisms or qualifications allow one to see more clearly how Rosen's own philosophical position is a revival of the Platonic self-understanding of the limits of wisdom, which limits derive from human nature not from a putative syntax or logic of thought derived from aping the methodology of modern science.

Rosen's sustained argument for the necessity of accounting for intuition and form in the Platonic sense has been one of the central achievements of his work. But this argument has been always coordinated with that concerning the open-ended character of the *erōs* of the soul. For Rosen, philosophy is a *theia dōsis*, which elevates the philosopher to a viewpoint above the inherently philosophical content of everyday life. The subsequent articulation of what is seen requires the constructive or poetic force of speech but it is based on a way of seeing or of *theōria* in the classical sense. In this context we are fortunate to have Chapters Eleven, Fifteen, Seventeen, and Nineteen. These relatively informal assessments of the state of philosophy in a time of intellectual and spiritual dislocation allow Rosen to furnish us with a more explicit sense of his understanding of philosophy than we have almost anywhere else.

Yet all of the essays in this book are testimony to the central theme of Rosen's later work, that the development of the deepest problems must do justice to their visibility in the surface of things.[3] Chapters twenty-two and twenty-three are particularly good examples. These essays are dense treatments of the metaphysical problems of memory, time, and temporality. They incidentally contribute further installments of Rosen's interpretation of one of Plato's most difficult dialogues, the *Philebus*, which itself challenges the reader to see the truth of the ordinary in the extraordinary measures of the principles of things. But the illumination of Plato's thought and its comparison with that of Kant, Husserl, and Heidegger, show above all Rosen's ability to speak to the most difficult issues without excessive technical elaboration: the complexity belongs wholly to the thought.

The various texts and thinkers discussed in Chapters Two through Five, Seven, Nine, Twenty-one, and Twenty-four also contribute to Rosen's rethinking of the ontological and epistemological bases of modern philosophy under the hypothesis that the search for the principles must start from reflection upon ordinary experience. Rosen, for example, reads Kant's *First Critique* as carefully as the specialist but with the comprehensive intention of making sense of life. Kant claims to provide the transcendental conditions for the possibility of any experience for beings such as ourselves, but Rosen shows in detail

that Kant's theory fails both on its own terms and because it cannot explain, to use Kant's own example, how we do in fact perceive that this thing here is a dog and not something else. And Kant's attempt to preserve morality by conceiving of practical thought as an obedience to universal laws necessarily separates morality from happiness, in the same way that it separates virtue from prudence. This stipulation ultimately reduces reason to the hope of merited happiness, that is, to an object of the will and the imagination. In general, against the modern priority given to freedom over being on the metaphysical level, with the consequence that order becomes the result of spontaneous construction, Rosen argues that it is the character of life which is spontaneous, not the structure of intelligibility.

But this does not mean that one can simply reverse Kant's Copernican revolution and return to the view that the mind simply conforms to the beings, not least because that was not the pre-Copernican view. In chapter thirteen, "The Absence of Structure," which is a critique of structuralism, Rosen argues that thinking should rather be described as a "detached approach" to things, which provides space for intention and intuition. One must allow for the role of the purposes of the thinker in conceptualizing thought and for the limits of our ability to say what thinking is, precisely because the structure of what is thought is not conscious and consciousness does not have a determinate structure.

Kant appears to be the acknowledged source of the two main currents of contemporary philosophy, conventionally denoted "analytical" and "continental" philosophy. Rosen's work on the analytical tradition has not yet received the attention bestowed on his work in the continental tradition. This is partly because the analytical project, even as it becomes a tradition accruing a historiography of its own, characteristically endeavors to distinguish clearly between original and historical work. Rosen's awareness of the provenance as well as the techniques of analytical thought, and his ability to assess the significance of the latter in the light of the former, might seem to place him in the historical category. Yet as Rosen shows, the distinction is self-defeating, since it patently condemns all so-called original work to certain historical

irrelevance after some trend or other has moved on. Rosen was one of the earliest and most stringent critics of the narrowing vision of the discipline of philosophy. He did not, however, make the temptingly easy dismissal of analytical philosophy. He studied its central texts and the foundations of mathematics, logic, and science to a degree matched by few of its modern practitioners. Chapter Twenty, "The Identity of, and Difference between, Analytical and Continental Philosophy," addresses a correlative difficulty in the self-knowledge of modern philosophy, by reflecting on the common origins of analytical and continental philosophy as a partial and so unsuccessful repudiation of Hegelianism.

Such reflections have provided the basis for Rosen's demonstration that postmodernity merely brings out the inner tensions present from the beginning within modern thought. This theme is developed in Chapter Eighteen, "Mind and Body in Nietzsche," which turns on the disjunction between the world of concern to human beings and the true world in Nietzsche's philosophy. That disjunction is present already in early modern thought in, for example, the application of the distinction between primary and secondary attributes to human affairs. An instance of the consequences of this application is raised in Chapter Ten, a review of Stephen Smith's well regarded interpretation of Spinoza. Rosen observes that Spinoza is both the first major thinker to speak out on behalf of democracy and the expositor of a philosophy "which is about as inhuman as a philosophy can get." Among the later consequences of the disjunction mentioned for modern paradigms of rationality is the predictable mixture of vulgar simplification and arrogant technical obfuscation perpetrated by disciplines like economics, whose influence greatly exceed their grasp of human life: Chapter Twenty-Five comments on one of the more rational practitioners of the profession of economics, and points out the ground that would have to be retraced to formulate a truly rational understanding of ourselves.

Nietzsche radicalizes the tension between the world of human significance and reality. Whether or not it was Nietzsche's awareness of the paradox presented by his own task, for some reason his genius permitted him to capture with peculiar brilliance

certain tendencies in the thought and culture of his own time in formulations that seem all the more striking as many of the same tendencies become even more obvious, not to mention exaggerated and coarse, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Consider, for example, Nietzsche's reference in *Beyond Good and Evil* to the best of contemporary philosophers as "sceptical anti-realists and epistemo-microscopists."[4] Nietzsche suspects that there lies beneath their distrust of appearances a desire to escape from "modern ideas," a longing to retreat to earlier metaphysical or theological certainties that he himself considers wholly discredited if not discreditable. His verdict is that if they had possessed "[a] bit *more* strength, flight, courage, [and] artistry" they would want to escape "*up and out*" of modernity and would not seek a return of any kind. Of course, Nietzsche took himself to have made such an escape, from which vantage point he could make his revolutionary call for the creation of new values. But, as Rosen suggests, it is difficult not to suspect that Nietzsche's denigration of the modern was inextricably informed by a longing for the ages of his heroes of, say, classical Rome or Renaissance Italy. If that is right, then it seems that Nietzsche could not take his own "advice whispered in the ear of the conservative."[5] His judgment of the ignobility of the current age and his call for the destruction of the whole tradition to allow space for creativity would be founded in a longing for a return to a specific formation of life, "a former measure of virtue."

Rosen too calls for and makes a new beginning, but emphatically not one that eradicates the very criteria by which we judge our own or past ages. Rosen's considerable philosophical "strength, flight, courage, and artistry" are in the service of philosophy in the classical sense, which purifies the distinction between the noble and the base as we find it in ordinary experience rather than obliterates it. One might compare the citation from Nietzsche just mentioned to a statement made by Rosen in an early work: "No one who loves philosophy will waste a moment in wishing for history to move backward, any more than he will contribute to the destruction of the present by vain wishes for the future."[6] One could argue that Rosen lives up to his own standard better than did Nietzsche his; more,

that it is a better standard, one that is true to the classical dictum that philosophy must show an intelligible link between the things first for us and the things first in themselves. Anyone who loves philosophy will benefit from the essays that follow.

Notes

1 This paper was delivered as the Inaugural Lecture for the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science, Boston University, October 1994.

2 Rosen has sometimes remarked, for example, that he learned something essential about the Platonic notion of the *eidos* or *idea* from his reading of Husserl.

3 The emergence of philosophy from everyday life is the subject of two of Rosen's later books, *Metaphysics in Ordinary Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999; Reprint: South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2004), and *The Elusiveness of the Ordinary: Studies in the Possibility of Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

4 *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zerkunft*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Colli and Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999; henceforth KSA), vol. 5, I.11, pp. 22–24. Translation: *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 11–12.

5 See *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert*, in KSA, vol. 6, "Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen" no. 43, p. 144. Translation: *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, tr. Walter Kaufman (New York: Penguin, 2009), pp. 546–547.

6 *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 1969; reprinted with the "Preface to the Portuguese Translation": South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2000), p. xvii.

CHAPTER ONE

Are We Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On? Against Reductionism

A preliminary remark about the subtitle of my lecture is in order.[1] I do not oppose all forms of reduction but only those that falsify or obscure the original phenomena. There are obviously many instances in which we need to explain a complex structure by reducing it to its generating elements. But life is not a structure; or at least certainly not one that is understood when we reduce it to its constituent elements. Dreaming is a function or power of life; the reduction of life to a dream amounts to the equation of wakefulness or genuine life with death. Unfortunately, as I am about to argue, the view of life as a dream recurs throughout our tradition, and may even be said to constitute an essential ingredient in our psychological makeup. If this is so, then the tendency to effect this reduction cannot be extirpated, and life assumes the form of a nightmare in which we attempt to persuade ourselves that we do not exist.

From the times of Solomon and Sophocles, the great poets of our tradition have emphasized the vanity, transience, and dream-like nature of human existence. At the same time, of course, one finds in the poetic tradition a celebration of the vividness of particular moments of existence such as love or sorrow. An example of this second tendency is to be found in Book Eleven of the *Odyssey*, where the ghost of Achilles asks the living Odysseus during his journey to Hades, "how could you endure to come down here to Hades' place, where the senseless dead men dwell, mere images of perished mortals?"[2] Achilles goes on to assure his visitor that he would rather be a bondsman on the surface of the earth than the king of the dead.[3]

One may suggest that for Achilles, as perhaps for Hamlet, it is not life but death that is a dream; his words certainly support

the inference that he does not doubt the substantiality of human existence, however brief its duration. By referring to the dead as "images of perished mortals" (*brotōn eidōla kamontōn*) Achilles indicates that life is the original of which death is a pale copy. Achilles, however, is a warrior, whereas Prospero is a magician and philosopher-king. The poet as metaphysician laments the dream-like insubstantiality of life, whereas the poet as warrior celebrates the vividness of its joys and sorrows. Actions speak louder than words; otherwise put, it is not activity but our reflective meditations that convince us of the dreamlike nature of life. The attempt to discover the meaning and value of life, whether through poetry, philosophy, or science, detaches us from life and reduces it to a phantom image.

When the followers of Prospero tell us that life is a dream, what do they understand by wakefulness? We can distinguish very generally two kinds of response, the religious and the non-religious. But there is a further division within the category of the religious. The words of Achilles illustrate the pagan view that life is wakefulness whereas death is a dream.[4] The testimony in the Hebrew Scripture is nuanced, but it contains no doctrine of personal immortality. If life is the vanity of vanities, the dead person lives on in the corporate existence of the people of Israel as obedient to the word of God. And this seems to entail the striking thesis that life becomes real, not when we are awake, but when we are asleep in the bosom of the Lord, or as a deconstructionist might put it, when we are incarnated discursively in the divine text.

If this is at all right, then one would expect Christian poetry to exemplify the contrast between heavenly and earthly existence as one between wakefulness and dreaming. I leave the examination of this hypothesis for another occasion. Let me suggest only that Jews and Christians stand together in contrast to the followers of Achilles by relegating secular life, but not of course a life transformed by faith or grace, to the domain of dreams. Please note, incidentally, that I do not make the stronger claim that all pagan poets are followers of Achilles. It is true, however, that the perception of the brevity of human life is for a pagan compatible with an acceptance of

its wakefulness. To say that life is fragile is not the same as to say that it is a dream. In what follows, I shall not try to develop the type of response to my question that religion offers. Suffice it to say that religious faith, or even the quasi-secular version of faith that we call hope, is not so easy to distinguish from a dream.

My intention today is to emphasize the problematic side of the thesis that life in this world is a dream. More precisely, I shall be primarily concerned with the two main types of philosophical thinking that I call for convenience the mathematical and the poetical. I am especially interested in what happens when these two dimensions of philosophy separate and assume independent and hyperbolical forms. My thesis, broadly stated, is that there is a reductivist tendency in both these modes of thought, stemming from a common perception of the transience of life. The poetic mode culminates in a celebration of transience, thereby reducing structure to the modalities of transience itself, whereas the mathematical mode attempts to bypass transience by explaining it as an epiphenomenon of structure. Please note that I am considering these modes here in their paradigmatic forms. The tendencies I have just identified do not constitute the entirety of poetry or mathematics, but express something fundamental to them. Modern science, as it seems to me, suffers from an inverted schizophrenia that manifests itself as the attempt to combine the mathematical and the poetic paradigms; on the one hand, life is reduced to structure; on the other, structure is transformed into an artifact. I will consider modern science as it presents itself rhetorically: at first as the fulfillment of mathematical philosophy, and finally, in our own time, even though as mathematical, nevertheless as a species of poetry. I will argue that in both these rhetorical stances, modern science leads directly to the view that life is a dream. I shall finally suggest that this view can be avoided, or at least mitigated, only by restricting the excessive activities of an emancipated poetry or mathematics by philosophy, which is reducible neither to the one nor to the other, but which emerges from and remains faithful to the unity and totality of human existence.

To begin with, I want to cite an important and usually neglected passage in Plato's *Republic*.[5] The passage is especially important

because it provides a crucial modification to the central role assigned by Socrates to mathematics in the education of potential philosophers. Mathematics, to be sure, points us in the direction of the Ideas or genuine natures of things, but mathematicians, Socrates says, "dream about being" whereas dialecticians perceive the beings as they genuinely are, and reason directly about them without the use of hypotheses or axioms on the one hand or images on the other. Mathematics stands to dialectic or wisdom as does dreaming to wakefulness. This is a specification of an earlier passage in which Socrates says that in dreaming we take a likeness to be not a likeness but the thing it is like.[6] Unfortunately, all talk of dialectic is apparently dreaming as well, like talk of perfect justice, since human beings, as Socrates says in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, are incapable of wisdom but must rest content in the best case with philosophy, that is to say, with loving or desiring wisdom.[7] That the city described in the *Republic*, together with its wise rulers, is "not altogether a daydream," as Socrates asks us to believe, is hard to accept, if to be wise is to know that one does not know.[8]

According to the Platonic Socrates, mathematicians believe that geometrical figures and pure numbers are the genuine or original beings of which their spatio-temporal counterparts are images and reflections. But human life is an epiphenomenon of those counterparts, an epiphenomenon that corresponds to nothing in the original or genuine figures and numbers. More precisely, life is not an image of a triangle or of the Pythagorean theorem. Our everyday experience, including our experience of ourselves as mathematicians, corresponds to no mathematical originals. We are thus faced with a choice of interpretations. Either human life is a simulacrum, something less than an image and barely to be characterized as a dream, or else it constitutes a distinct type of originality, other than the mathematical forms and irreducible to them. One would expect the philosopher, and in particular the philosopher who is concerned to know himself, to choose the second alternative. But this is not the conclusion at which Socrates explicitly arrives.

He cannot do so because philosophical dialectic in its purest form duplicates the mathematical reduction of life to formal structure.

The dialecticians, assuming that there are any, are said to be awake in the sense that they are reasoning about the pure forms rather than about mathematical entities. And here is the problem. Dialectical reasoning has no more to say about human life, or about the human significance of philosophizing, than does the mathematician. Most important, it cannot tell us how to live the good life that Socrates asserts to be his major concern. It would seem that living the good life is equivalent to personal extinction in the pure contemplation of formal structure. What we normally refer to as life is then something like a dream of wakefulness. Otherwise stated, when Socrates turns from everyday experience to reflection upon the soul and its earthly life, he turns away from dialectic to myth.

The problem, then is that human existence is not a copy of Platonic Ideas. It seems therefore to be not merely formless but entirely insubstantial. In the *Phaedrus*,[9] Socrates says that it is not possible for mortals to describe the Idea of soul but only to tell what it is like. Socrates is referring here not to the soul of the cosmos, the principle of change (*archē kinēseōs*), but to the soul of the individual person. This is obvious because, in order to tell what the soul is like, he narrates the myth of the winged charioteer and the noble and base horses, or in other words, the intellect and the two opposite forms of erotic spiritedness.

In somewhat more expansive terms, Ideas correspond to natural kinds and abstractions like the properties and relations of things, or to moral qualities, but not to actions or integrated sequences of actions, and certainly not to what we now call self-consciousness. Even if there were an Idea of the soul, then, it would tell us nothing about life. There is no genuine domain of waking existence in some place beyond the heavens that is the original of which our dream-like existence is the image. In Socrates's myth, he tells how the bodiless divine souls rise to the roof of the cosmos and there view the pure Ideas. But our souls are not copies or instances of these divine beings; we are held back by our bodies and see only reflections of the Ideas, as though through a glass darkly. In order to see the Ideas themselves, we must be dead.

In the *Symposium*, the priestess Diotima tells the young Socrates that Eros is continuously changing its shape, that is, continuously dying and returning to life.[10] Accordingly, there is no Idea of Eros, but only a myth of the erotic ascent to the Ideas by the human soul. One could infer from the mythical status of the doctrine of Eros that the ascent to the Ideas is a dream. No one could suppose that the winged charioteer and his two steeds are the genuine reality of the human soul. The soul is patently not the dream-image of an actual charioteer and his horses. It would be more correct, but still unsatisfactory, to refer to the image of the charioteer as a dream-image of the soul. In this case, the original condition of wakefulness is that of unsatisfied Eros. And since Eros is defined by the object of desire, we are once more left with no conceptual access to the intrinsic nature of consciousness.[11]

In sum: a quasi-mathematical rationalism not only cannot explain the phenomenon of human existence but serves to empty it of independent substance and significance. If we try to reconcile Plato's myths of the soul with his doctrine of Ideas, the myths look like subterfuges, or philanthropic attempts to conceal the bitter truth under a salutary veil of rhetoric. They look like noble lies. This is why those who repudiate myth or for whom reason is equivalent to calculation and formal analysis arrive sooner or later at the surrender to, or celebration of irrationalism. Whether they affirm or deny reason is irrelevant; the crucial point is that both affirmers and deniers exclude life from the sphere of the rational. At the very least, mythical thinking must play a decisive role in supplementing the thin gruel of traditional rationalism when it comes to understanding ourselves.

On my view, then, the soul is itself an original; it is not an image like the one constructed by Socrates. There is no Platonic Idea of the soul, to which the living soul stands as itself an image or dream-creature. If there is an answer in the Platonic dialogues to the question "what is the soul?" that answer is not a rational account of determinate structure but rather the dialogues themselves, as we come to understand them through the exercise of recreating them in our discursive imagination. If we pursue this analysis,

we seem to arrive at the following result. The answer to the question "what is the soul?" cannot be a scientific explanation or logically clarified empirical description. Images, metaphors, or models assist us in understanding the soul, and it is plausible to say that understanding is to ignorance as wakefulness is to dreaming. But images, metaphors, and models are artifacts of the activity of the soul. Whatever structure they possess is not the same as the structure of the soul, because in fact the soul has no structure. Structure defines and delimits; it is closer to death than to life. The cognitive soul produces structures which, when we succumb to the temptation to apply them to ourselves, destroy us.

If this is right, then we need a sense of "theory" that is neither the pure intuition of formal structure nor the modern constructivist interpretation that results in technical artifacts standing between us and what we wish to understand. We cannot "see" or theorize ourselves in a state of unconsciousness induced by the intuition of pure forms. But neither can we see ourselves if the direct effect of self-inspection is to generate a private perspective that blocks us from public view. It is in other words self-defeating to define reason as incapable of understanding human life; but it is also contrary to our everyday experience, an experience about which, it must candidly be admitted, art in general and poetry in particular are much more illuminating than the baroque rationalist constructions of the philosophers. And this is why the mathematical dimension of Platonism, once its initial impetus of liberation is spent, begins its steady decline into poetic ideology. If life is a dream and its explanation a myth, then reason, as the instrument of explanation, must explain itself as a myth. The typical modern formulation of that myth, which is stated as an act of both daring and despair, is the assertion that we know only what we make.

Platonism explains the soul as the mythical bearer of the powers of the unstructured intuition of pure form and discursive reflection. Modern philosophy is characterized decisively by the separation of these two elements into mathematical epistemology on the one hand and doctrines of self-consciousness or subjectivity on the other. The mathematical epistemologists fluctuate uneasily between

doctrines of pure formal intuition, which has no inner structure, and linguistically oriented philosophies of mind, which attempt to extract the structure of thinking from the structure of language. If theoretical discourse is the identification of structure, one can only be silent about intuition. On the other hand, the search for cognitive structure in the structure of language leads inevitably to conventionalism or historicism. This is because languages are themselves historical artifacts. And this is also the fate of doctrines of subjectivity, which culminate in solipsism, often under the alias of intersubjectivity. The attempt to develop a scientific or theoretical account of subjectivity that is distinct from epistemology has the paradoxical consequence of the reinstitution of a comprehensive myth, as is so obvious in late-modern or postmodern thought. The dissolution of Platonism, in short, gives rise to two separate and warring Dybbuks, each a simulacrum of one-half of the original.

For Plato, the correct medium for the philosophical discussion of human life is myth or more specifically dramatic poetry: in particular, the poetry of the Platonic dialogues. In particular, but not exclusively; in the *Republic*, even while exalting mathematics and sharply criticizing the poets, paramount among them Homer, Socrates continues throughout to quote the poets, paramount among them Homer, in order to illustrate human life as it is actually lived. This is of crucial importance. Homer, as we are told in the *Theaetetus*, is the general of what one could call Socrates' ontological enemies, namely, those who assert that everything is change.[12] All appearances to the contrary, however, he is Socrates' ally and even paradigm in the attempt to understand the living soul. Socrates could hardly have quoted the mathematicians in this attempt, or for that matter the pre-Socratic thinkers like Parmenides and Heraclitus.

In sum: philosophers must employ poetry not only to explain life but in order to praise philosophy, and so too dialectic. As so employing poetry, however, they are not themselves poets but philosophers, namely, persons who are awake and who attempt to awaken the rest of us by altering the structure and content of our dreams. To restrict oneself to myth or poetry in order to explain life is self-defeating. Myths are as it were too successful; in their

openness to every explanation, they encourage the view that life is a dream. The key to the riddle of the Platonic dialogue is thus how to understand human life without reducing it to a bogus mathematical entity on the one hand or a myth on the other.

I am now at a transitional moment in my lecture. Let me therefore summarize my remarks to this point. There is a powerful tendency in human reflection to think of life as a dream. This is encouraged by philosophy to the extent that formal structures are presented as paradigms, models or essences of which spatio-temporal particulars are only copies. Since there is no eternal paradigm of human life, we are tempted in two different but finally related ways, either to construct a formal model of life or to transform human being into a myth. Philosophy falls apart into mathematics and poetry. I want now to show that although one might think that mathematics is the initial victor in the struggle for the human soul, it is actually poetry that triumphs. As separate from poetry, mathematics, the ostensibly purest form of reason, becomes radically non-rational. It can neither explain nor justify itself, and so must have recourse to poetry or myth in order to repair its inability. In so doing, mathematics becomes a myth.

By way of transition between the two parts of my lecture, allow me one more remark about Plato. The most curious characteristic of the Platonic dialogues is that they are poems apparently devoted to the celebration of mathematics and the denigration of poetry. I offer here only a brief explanation for this feature. Plato knew that poetry has more power than mathematics over the soul. He therefore attempted to inoculate us against the former and in favor of the latter. It would have been absurd to write a mathematical celebration of mathematics; not merely absurd, but impossible. This is one way in which to understand why Plato wrote dialogues. Unfortunately, human beings have a difficult time in reconciling two diverse intellectual modalities. Hence the disappearance or dissolution of the dialogues into the history of philosophy, or into what one could call the pseudo-Platonic dialectic of poetry and mathematics

Otherwise put, Plato attempted to unify philosophy, mathematics, and poetry within philosophical *epistēmē*. But his attempt was too subtle to withstand the necessary brutality of the hermeneutical

diversity his dialogues invoke. Plato, whose comprehensive artistry is in keeping with the aristocratic nature of the founder and president of the first university, was attacked almost immediately by his greatest student, Aristotle, a bourgeois professor who is celebrated as the founder of the division of intellectual labor into the separate sciences. The history of philosophy actually begins with Aristotle, who transformed Plato's poetic language into professional terminology, thereby eliciting the observation from Immanuel Kant that whereas Plato's philosophy is *Schwärmerei*, "die Philosophie des Aristoteles ist dagegen Arbeit" ("The philosophy of Aristotle is on the other hand work").[13] Let us now look briefly at the process by which *Schwärmerei* was transformed into work in the modern epoch, and then back again at the end of modernity into *Schwärmerei*.

Modern philosophy begins substantially with the birth of experimental and mathematical science, which carries with it the distinction between primary and secondary attributes. Primary attributes, of which genuine knowledge is said to be possible, are number, geometrical figure, magnitude, and motion, to name the leading candidates. As primary, that is, as genuinely knowable, they are held to constitute genuine being, or what we see when we are genuinely awake. The secondary attributes include the full range of properties whose perception or apprehension depends upon our spatio-temporal existence within daily life and so too upon ourselves who see the primary attributes.

It is immediately obvious that modern philosophy at least prior to the advent of Kant and German Idealism could be called Platonism on two counts: first, it is rooted in the mathematical structure of genuine being; second, it implies when it does not explicitly state that human life is a dream, and a dream to which no waking stage corresponds, unless it be the Cartesian *lumen naturale*, that is, the radically nonsubjective cognition of pure forms by a special, non-reflexive power of subjectivity. This is, to be sure, the partial Platonism of the Dybbuk of mathematicism, but it can be justified by the texts of the master, provided one forgets about the Platonic original and replaces it with an Aristotelian artifact.

The dream-status of human life is not emphasized, perhaps not even explicitly mentioned, by the founders of the modern epoch, with the massive exception of the Cartesian demon or malignant genius who, with his hypothetical power to deceive us on all particulars except consciousness of the deception, is one of the principal ancestors of contemporary modal metaphysics. And the role assigned to this demon by Descartes is to issue a wake-up call, or in other words to move us to extricate ourselves from the dreams of traditional philosophy. One could receive the impression, from studying the early modern period and the scientific Enlightenment, that science is pitted in a heroic struggle with poetry, alias traditional religion and philosophy, in order to awaken mankind from its dreamlike bondage to nature on the one hand and the religio-political establishment on the other. That modern science is itself a dream is gradually brought to consciousness by the evolution of the doctrine of subjectivity into that of historicism. Let me briefly clarify this observation.

The doctrine of the *lumen naturale*, as Descartes refers to the power of the intellect to apprehend mathematical form, is obviously a descendant of Platonic *noēsis*. Descartes, however, unlike Plato, embeds the natural light in the *ego cogitans* or principle of subjectivity, which one could describe as the solipsistic revision of the communal or political character of Greek discursivity. Isolated from its fellow creatures by the paranoid fear of an evil genius who could be deceiving it into dreaming that it is awake, the ego, in seeking for security, awakens to the nightmare of late-modern historicism and perspectivism. It occurs to me that a Catholic might call this the natural consequence of the Protestant Reformation: the assertion of individuality dissolves into chaos. If so, then Descartes is not a Catholic but a Huguenot.

I use the term historicism to characterize the modern dissolution of the self-certifying Cartesian ego, and so of the object as a project of the subject. The ego cannot explain itself on either of the two Cartesian models, since it is neither a geometrical and algebraic structure nor the intuitive apprehension of these structures. It is also deprived of recourse to myth or poetry, the second Platonic option,

by the specious if compelling dream of scientific precision and the efficacious mastery of nature.

In order to explain itself, the ego must therefore have recourse to feelings and sensations, and this is the next historical step. These are treated in one of two ways: either psychologistically or transcendentally. In the first case, the result is empiricism or the impossibility of distinguishing between imagination and reality, that is, between wakefulness and dreaming, a distinction that is fatally assigned to the vividness of our impressions. In the second case, the result is the replacement of the activity of living by the ostensible conditions for the possibility of cognizing. When these conditions are seen to vary with the historical development of science, the transcendental ego is replaced at first by the historical ego and then by the historicist doctrine of the local linguistic horizon. The conviction gradually obtains, in a process culminating in Nietzsche, that the subject must itself be a project or object, that is to say, a construction of subjectivity, and even further, that there is no single subject but rather an infinite regression of multiple subjects, each opening a unique perspective, for each of which the others are arbitrary dreams of wakefulness.

The problem of the dreamlike nature of human life is thus an inheritance from our failure to have solved the riddle of the Platonic dialogue and haunts modern philosophy from Descartes to the present day. As I suggested a moment ago, the evil genius postulated by Descartes as the possible cause of the illusory dream of human existence is the direct progenitor of the Martians whom contemporary modal metaphysicians warn us may be saturating us with rays that cloak reality with a veil of illusion. As the progress of mathematical and experimental science accelerates, so too does the decay of subjectivity, the dissolution of the self, the disappearance of consciousness into the unconscious, and in short, of the *ego cogitans* into the dark jungle of neurophysiology. To say the same thing in a different way, philosophy moves inexorably toward assimilation into poetry, as one can see even in the philosophy of mathematics, with its talk of alternative axiom-sets, possible worlds, deviant logics, non-standard integers, and at last the demotion of mathematics to a

social activity of contingent historical beings. The world of ordinary experience is thus reduced to the status of an outmoded poem. As a single metaphor of the entire age, I note that the last book published by Nelson Goodman, the apostle of logical construction, is entitled *Ways of World-Making*. I myself prefer Marcel Proust.

As T. S. Eliot expresses the point in the idiom of our own time, "go, go, go, said the bird; human kind cannot bear very much reality." The detachment from experience that is ingredient to thinking, and by definition to abstract thinking, as for example in leaving the cave of political existence for the light of genuine being, renders the world insubstantial. Solipsistic meditation, whether of mathematical structures or the nature of God, soul, and immortality, is no more capable than Platonic *noēsis* of validating the substantiality of our daily lives. We are no longer the triumphant eye that extends beyond the body of the cave but, in the beautiful words of Allen Tate, "we are the eyelids of defeated caves."

From this standpoint, one can understand Husserl's doctrine of the *Lebenswelt*, like Heidegger's existential analysis of *Dasein*, as 20th century attempts to revivify the philosophically unsatisfactory efforts of thinkers like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche in the nineteenth century to dismantle Absolute Idealism. Kierkegaard and Husserl start from the standpoint of the subject, Nietzsche and Heidegger from that of the abolition of the subject-object distinction. Kierkegaard turns away from philosophy towards revelation; Nietzsche dissolves philosophy into the chaos of modern scientific materialism and an amalgam of neurophysiology and psychology. Husserl covers over the life-world with the categorial structures of phenomenology, even while bracketing out of consideration the engagement and values of actual existence; Heidegger contradicts himself by constructing existential categories out of historical contingencies, and is forced to take refuge in the pure happenstance of Being as event.

So much for my account of how we have moved from universal subjectivity to particular history and beyond to sheer difference. Well, then: are we such stuff as dreams are made on? Was Prospero right after all? If to be awake is to live in the actual or genuine world,

and if rationalism is right in defining the genuine world as consisting of formal structures, whether these be further defined as pure Being, Platonic Ideas, tables of categories, syntactical horizons, or DNA, then one could not even call our life a dream, since to awaken is to disappear. If Nietzsche is right and formal structures are contingent projections of perspectival or historical thinking, then everyday life is surely a dream, and a noble lie or salutary respite from the nightmare of wakeful chaos.

I do not, however, infer from this summary and preliminary conclusion that Prospero is correct. To me the striking feature of the rationalist and existentialist accounts is that neither postulates a genuine form of existence that stands as wakefulness to the dream of life. On the contrary, life is identified as a dream precisely because, they say or imply, there is no condition of wakefulness, but only one version or another of chaos or nothingness. To awaken is to die, whether through an epiphany of pure forms, assimilation into the absolute, or a dissolution into pure difference.

In short, whether we define it as the realm of Platonic Ideas, the syntax of a universal language, or an unknowable domain of things in themselves, not to say as chaos or difference, the heaven of traditional philosophy cannot be the original of which human life is an image. By the same token, it is simple nonsense to say that human beings are "actually" computers, or force fields, or slaves of their genes. If this is what human beings "actually" are, then there are actually no human beings. How then explain the mass delusion known as historical existence, a delusion that is not merely defined by, but that includes the agents of, scientific, poetic, or philosophical reductivism?

I have suggested that the reason why we are tempted to think that human life is a dream is precisely because it cannot be reduced to anything else, whereas we are accustomed already in our pre-theoretical or pre-scientific experience to regard an explanation as a reduction of one set of phenomena into another. Everyone would grant the absurdity of saying that the beings or experiences reduced for explanatory purposes into some more general theoretical vocabulary have thereby ceased to exist. To take a famous example,

the lectern on which my manuscript rests is no doubt correctly said to consist of atoms in the void. But this should not allow us to forget that my manuscript will not rest upon atoms in the void, nor can I lean on them, in any but a metaphorical sense.

The role of the lectern in the everyday world is not clarified by its reduction to atoms in the void; on the contrary, that role is rendered obscure and even empty, because the shift in discursive registers removes us entirely from the sphere of life. It is of course easy to think of circumstances in which knowledge of the atomic domain would be eminently useful or simply admirable to residents in the everyday world. But this requires the preservation of both domains, not the reduction of one to the other. It makes no sense to be told that the science of atomic physics, for example, is the noblest human possession, but that the humans who possess it are illusory residents of a dream-world to which no wakeful state corresponds.

If there is an underlying unity of science and the humanities, its root is human life. I do not doubt that mathematics, philosophy, and poetry are the ramifications of that root, or to vary the metaphor, the passages by which we emerge from fragility, transience, and ambiguity into a more substantial domain. In so emerging, however, we become what we are; we do not cease to be what we were. Life is not a dream in the sense that there exists a state of wakefulness external to it. The only condition external to life is death. The only transcendence to eternity that possesses a human meaning is one that preserves our humanity.

I began this lecture by isolating the mathematical dimension of the Platonic dialogues on the one hand and the general testimony of the western poetic tradition on the other. I want now to prepare my conclusion by returning to the poetical dimension of Platonism, and in that way to the general question of the poetical dimension of the philosophical response to life. A mathematical or purely formal Platonism condemns human existence to the domain of dreams because there is no Idea of the living soul. As I have contended, the absence of such an Idea, very far from constituting a deficiency, is essential to the extraordinary fecundity of human existence. We are free to create our lives; on this point the poetic champions of

contingency are right. But this freedom deteriorates into anarchy and chaos if it is emancipated from mathematics and formal structure. One does not rectify the mistake of attempting to mathematicize human existence by poeticizing mathematics and formal structure.

It follows from this that poetry is by itself incapable of protecting us from the vitiating interpretation of wakefulness as dreaming. Art must be reinforced by religion or philosophy in order to overcome the dreamlike status it assigns to life as it is lived, in contrast to life as portrayed or celebrated. The work of art, in other words, stands to the daily events of life as do Platonic Ideas to their spatio-temporal particulars. Even if art begins as the celebration of life, our attention is soon diverted from life to the work of art itself. For both artist and audience, the essential human being, the actuality or full wakefulness of which our own temporal existences seem to us to be dreamlike imitations, is the hero or anti-hero of the work of art itself. In an unheroic age, the situation deteriorates still further; life is reduced to the study of textuality.

At the same time, however, the formal or ideal function of the art-work is compromised by its own contingency: its uniqueness, its sensuousness, its historical context, the untranslatability of poetic diction, and so on. As one could put this, the artwork *qua* Idea is poisoned by the virus of the contingency of its own content or subject-matter. The same thing happens in philosophy when subjectivity deteriorates into subjectivism and the perception of historical progress evaporates into the random multiplicities of a decentered perspectivism.

My lecture has been devoted to the problem of the steady dissipation of our sense of reality. The very doctrines that are designed to sustain a "robust sense of reality," in Bertrand Russell's phrase, are turning us into phantoms, ghosts in the machine, the firing of synapses, irrelevant rather than celebratory ornaments on the evolving tree of life. The Nobel-prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg says somewhere that the more we understand the nature of the universe, the more pointless it seems.

I myself find more suggestive the following passage from a book by the Italian physicist, Toraldo di Francia: "human beings

are definitely contingent entities, very far from anything that is fixed and constant in nature. We are either too large (e.g., our size and mass as compared to those of elementary particles) or too small (e.g., the speeds we can attain as compared with the speed of light). Is this contingency, perhaps, an essential feature of our singular nature?"[14]

Toraldo is in part repeating a thought expressed first by Pascal, namely, that human beings are caught between the two infinities of the universe of the new science. Pascal sees this intermediateness as a dilemma that will destroy our humanity unless we escape through religious faith. Toraldo offers no development of his conjecture about human nature, but it is fair to say that there is no trace of religious faith or existential despair in his book. Whether he is entitled to the equanimity, one could even say the self-confidence deriving from modern science, is another question.

The reason why I find his words so suggestive is because they open a space within the same enterprise that leads Weinberg to suspect pointlessness. The space is certainly metaphorical or poetical rather than scientific, but that is precisely the point. Human life is not defined by ontological or mathematical structures; it is not defined by laws or rules but produces them. This is not to invalidate or even to relativise the laws and rules but to restrict them to their proper domain. At the same time, the singular or extra-legal nature of human life does not free us from obedience to those laws or rules because we define ourselves by becoming citizens of their domain.

In this last part of my lecture, I want to say a few words about what I take to be the necessary next stage in the philosophical analysis of the problem of wakefulness. I anticipated myself previously by referring to the regulation of mathematics and poetry by a philosophical fidelity to the unity and totality of everyday life. As a first step in making this remark more substantial, let me say that what is required is a fundamental revision, or at least expansion, of Platonism. Still more precisely, I believe that, in the last analysis, the Platonic portrait of human existence on the one hand and the epistemic cognition of formal structure on the other, is not sustained within the dialogues by any line of argument, explicit or implicit.

They are held together only dramatically, by the dialogue-form itself, which invites us to re-enact in our own lives the twin paths of poetry and mathematics. But this is unfortunately unsatisfactory, since we are directed toward philosophy in order to discover not simply theoretical truth but even more urgently the good life. If the good life is available only as a dramatic enactment of dualism, then we are as it were dissolved by the very remedy for our internal disunion.

If I am not mistaken, this is why the young Hegel says in his *Differenzschrift* that philosophy begins in the division (*Entzweiung*) or "torn harmony" (*zerrissene Harmonie*) of the human spirit.[15] Whether or not this is what Hegel had in mind, I want to appropriate his words for my own purposes. It is in my view a fundamental error to conceive of the Platonic dialogues as the presentation of Plato's philosophical doctrines or system. The dialogues are instead a dramatic propaedeutic to philosophy, a representation of the problem of the disjunction of poetry from mathematics, and not at all a resolution of that problem. The silence of a dramatic representation has led to conflicting inferences on the part of Plato's readers. Some have taken him to indicate that there are no solutions to the fundamental philosophical problem; others believe that he concealed his solution out of aristocratic pride or perhaps philanthropy, whereas still others do not even notice the problem but busy themselves in the analysis of fragments of his enigmatic texts, on the tacit assumption that there is no enigma but only a random collection of technical puzzles.

Plato's silence, one could say, led to the history of philosophy as the development of the two distinct aspects of his dialogues. This development seems to have exhausted itself; hence the current obsession with postmodernism, the end of history, and most important, the end of philosophy. I suggest that instead of talking about the end of philosophy, we ought to see the present confused time as the opportunity for a new beginning. Unlike Heidegger, however, I do not mean by this a new epoch in the history of Being, but rather a radical reinterpretation of the fragments of the old epoch. In a certain sense, this means business as usual, since the history of

philosophy is by its nature a continuous beginning or retracing of old paths; if this were not true, there would be no such activity as philosophy, but only poetry.

Rather than advocating a startling new mode of thinking, I propose instead that we take the following three steps in order to initiate our own version of the perpetual philosophical beginning. First: we require a thorough reconsideration of how philosophy originates from ordinary experience. This reconsideration must not be defined by technical presuppositions about the nature of such experience, and in particular not by the scientific reductionism that leads to the conviction that life is a dream. Second: we have to take another careful look at dialectical thinking in the Hegelian sense, in order to acquire a deeper understanding of how to resolve the oppositions that are intrinsic to all forms of dualism, and in particular to static conceptions of form as opposed to the process of life. Third: the Kantian doctrine of the spontaneity of thinking must be reformulated in such a way as to free it from the problem that spontaneously produced laws, rules, or categories infect the bloodstream of necessity with the virus of contingency. It is everyday life that is spontaneous, not the structure of intelligibility.

Underlying the formulation of these three steps is the following general conviction. Whereas philosophy is an extraordinary disruption of the ordinary, it is in response to the complexities of everyday life as we live it; hence its role is not to replace ordinary existence by some other mode of experience or intellectual activity but to explain how and why the problems or deficiencies of ordinary experience require extraordinary responses. But the responses cannot be extraordinary in the sense of substituting a technical artifact for ordinary experience. In particular, it makes no sense to speak of ordinary experience as a junk-heap of discarded scientific theories. Our lives need to be clarified and deepened, not transformed into computer software or random perturbations on the surface of chaos.

The view of life as a dream begins in reflection upon its transience and uncertainty; we accordingly attribute permanence and precision to the structures of wakefulness, thereby concealing from ourselves

that if these structures were to define our own lives, we should cease to exist. The problem underlying the lament of Prospero is thus not how to wake up, but rather how to stay awake. Once more, I hope that I have not put you to sleep with this excerpt of my own insomnia. I close with yet another citation of a poet, Delmore Schwartz, who, no doubt while tossing one sleepless night "in the naked bed, in Plato's cave," came to understand that "in dreams begin responsibilities." But with responsibilities, wakefulness begins.

Notes

1 The present chapter was the inaugural lecture of the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science (delivered in October, 1994). Accordingly, I have made no attempt to alter the podium style.
2 XI.474 f., Lattimore's translation (*The Odyssey of Homer,* New York: Harper Collins, 1967), modified.
3 *Ibid.*, 489–91.
4 For discussion, see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 194–99.
5 533b6 f.
6 *Ibid.* V, 476c5–7.
7 *Symposium* 204a1 ff., *Phaedrus* 278d3–6.
8 *Republic* VII, 540d1 ff.
9 246a1–6. The same situation obtains in the *Timaeus,* 35a1 ff., where Timaeus speaks of the construction of the world-soul *eis mian idean.* Nothing is said here of the individual soul because the life has to be lived; it cannot be constructed in advance since there is nothing out of which to produce activities other than the process of activity itself, which is precisely the process by which we construct our lives as we live them, and not as a copy of something else.
10 *Symposium* 202d11 ff., 203d7 f.
11 When objects come to be defined in the modern era as projects of consciousness, the indeterminate Eros becomes the will to power.
12 *Theaetetus* 152e2 f.
13 *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie* in *Kants Werke* (Akademie Textausgabe; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), Bd.8, p. 392.
14 *The Investigation of the Physical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 46.
15 In *Jenaer Kritische Schriften* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1979), p. 10.

CHAPTER TWO

Kant's Doctrine of Perception

I. Introduction

In this study I shall argue in considerable detail that Kant's doctrine of the transcendental constitution of the world is unable to explain the facts of empirical perception. I intend by this argument to support the more general thesis that the "Copernican revolution" fails to sustain the desirability of transforming the classical being or *res* into the object of a subject. In slightly different terms, Kant's question "how are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible?" itself begs the question of whether there are any synthetic *a priori* judgments. Kant assumes what he ostensibly intends to demonstrate, namely, that we possess an indubitable or *a priori* knowledge of necessary connections (e.g., the law of causality) and of mathematical truth that cannot be derived from reflection upon beings taken as existing independently of the activity of cognition, and which must therefore be assigned the role of "transcendental" conditions for the possibility of experiencing a world such as our own (as is argued in detail in the two Prefaces).

These conditions, in other words, have the status of rules that bind the cognitive activity of beings like ourselves who employ conceptual thinking and sensuous intuition; as holding this "transcendental" status, the rules define not merely how it is possible for us to know "objects" but also how it is possible for objects to exist. The justification for this summary statement may be indicated briefly by citing the Transcendental Deduction at B137.[1] Kant says there that the understanding is the capacity for knowledge, which in turn lies in "the determinate relation of given representations to an object. *Objekt* however is that, in whose concept the manifold of a given intuition is *unified.*" Knowledge is thus clearly identified as the constitution of the object of experience. As we shall see below, this is inseparable from perception.

A synthetic *a priori* judgment is one that is both true and necessary, not because of this or that particular experience, but as the ground for the possibility of necessary truth about empirical objects. It is *a priori*, not because we can formulate it without any experience whatsoever, but because it is necessarily true regardless of what experience we have, and this because it constitutes experience (B13). For the same reason, such a judgment is synthetic, because it extends our knowledge about empirical objects, or enables us to determine additional "real predicates" of the perceivable objects of experience, and it does this by determining or specifying the object within a network of conceptual rules that define the conditions for the possibility of a coherent and so intelligible world (B218; the principle of the Analogies of Experience is as follows: "Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions").

The key to my criticism of Kant is the fact that, despite numerous statements to the contrary, in his doctrine perception arises from the conceptual determination of sensation. As I shall contend, this means that one is quite justified to attribute (as Heidegger in effect does) to Kant the consequence, if not the intention, that *esse est percipi*. What exists is the object of perception; but the object of perception is constituted by the conceptual activity of understanding. An immediate consequence of this doctrine is that there can be no false judgments of perception. In addition to this difficulty, there is a problem about the relation, or as we might also say, "synthesis," of necessity and contingency. The existence and cognitive structure of any empirical object, e.g., a dog, is guaranteed by transcendental and hence necessary rules, concepts, categories, and so on. These *a priori* concepts both make the empirical object possible and also determine its actuality as an intelligible object of scientific knowledge.

At the same time, empirical objects have no *empirical* nature; i.e., there is no *eidos* or *physis*, to use terms from Greek philosophy, of the dog, to which the mind conforms in the processes, perceptual or conceptual, of cognition. The "nature" of the dog is a function of scientific knowledge. But this expression, namely,

"scientific knowledge of empirical objects," has two incompatible senses in Kant's doctrine. On the one hand, it means the positioning of the object within the necessary connection of perceptions constituting experience (B218), and therefore the subordination of the object to transcendental rules, categories, concepts, etc. On the other hand, scientific knowledge of empirical objects is in continuous change (B508, B521, B755); what it means to be a dog is thus a function of the latest scientific knowledge about dogs, mammals, biology, and so on.

The upshot is that there must be a necessary, *a priori* and synthetic structure that positions the dog by determining the conditions for any empirical object whatsoever, but which is obviously useless in determining the identity of any particular object of experience; and second, there must be a continuous flux of "perceptions," which have no intrinsic determinateness since they are regularly determined or interpreted by the current stage of scientific knowledge. This flux is on the one hand indistinguishable from what Kant refers to as the "rhapsody" (B195) of sensations as not yet determined by the conceptual structure through which we cognize the empirical object. It is therefore unintelligible how we identify a dog as a dog, not only within our informal or pre-scientific experience, but also as an object of science.

As we shall see, the situation is made worse rather than better by Kant's doctrine of the schematism with respect to perception. To mention only the crucial point, a schema is a product of the imagination, but not an image, e.g., of a dog; instead, it is "the representation of a method" for representing a concept in an image. In the case of the dog, the empirical concept is "dog" and the schema of the imagination is "four-footed animal" (B179 f.). But as I have just indicated, there is no empirical concept of the dog in advance of our experience of the dog; instead, there is a transcendental structure of a possible object and a swarm of sensations, open to any interpretation whatsoever. As to the schema, it is unable to distinguish between dogs and elephants.

In slightly different terms, in order to perceive a dog, I must combine its concept with a set of sensations by way of a schematism.

But there is no concept of dog *qua* dog until *after* I have performed the requisite synthesis of concept, sensations, and schematism. What concept will I employ in this act of synthesis? Not the empirical concept, since it is the result of the synthesis. Not the concept of object *qua* object, or let us say not that alone, since it is useless in determining the swarm of sensations and the amorphous schematism into the identifiable perception of a dog, and in particular of this dog here. The only answer, as it seems to me, is one that Kant does not quite state explicitly, but that follows from his understanding of the continuous progress of empirical scientific knowledge. What it is to be a dog, and hence the empirical concept of the dog, is not the result of any transcendental syntheses but rather of "hermeneutics" or the interpretation of experience under the guidance of natural science. But that which science interprets is itself a matter of conjecture, i.e., of antecedent interpretation, that is to say, of the interpretation of sensation.

I shall have to return to these points below with additional detail. It seemed best, however, in view of the complexity and cumbersomeness, as well as the terminological inconsistency of Kant's doctrine, to state the pivotal conclusions at the outset.

When one attempts to understand any single definition or analysis of a central point in Kant's philosophy, it soon becomes necessary to define each of the terms in that definition or analysis with a commentary of its own; in this way, the effort to understand Kant is like attempting to remove oneself from quicksand by procedures that draw one further into its depths. One cannot therefore avoid a certain amount of repetition in discussing any single Kantian theme, nor can one proceed systematically from the beginning of the *First Critique* (with which I shall be alone concerned) to the end.

One general remark must be made at the outset. Kantians always insist that Kant is not concerned with the actual process of empirical knowledge, but only with the transcendental conditions for the possibility of knowledge. But this contention is demonstrably false. In the first place, Kant offers a number of fragmentary explanations as to how we actually perceive an empirical object. As I have argued

elsewhere,[2] and will show in detail here, these explanations are worthless as accounts of how we perceive any particular object, e.g., (to take Kant's own example) a dog, let alone a particular dog. In the second place, precisely if we accept as Kant's primary intention the construction of a model purporting to explain the possibility of knowledge by beings like us of a world like ours, then we are entitled to demand that the model actually fulfils its intention. If on the contrary, as I shall argue, the model makes impossible the fulfillment of the intention for which it was constructed, that is sufficient grounds for rejecting the model.

II. The Prefaces and Introduction of the *First Critique*

I turn now to the textual details of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. My intention is to provide an analysis and immanent critique of the doctrine of perception contained therein. Within the limits described in the previous section, I shall attempt to trace the development of the theme of perception approximately as it unfolds. A certain amount of selection and concision is mandatory, if the crucial problems are not to be concealed beneath a wealth of superfluous detail. I shall therefore not discuss every passage that might be linked to the doctrine of perception, since this would require a book-length study of virtually the entire *First Critique*. On the other hand, I will not leave out any passage that is indispensable for my theme.

In the *A* preface, Kant makes the central point that metaphysicians reason on the basis of principles (*Grundsätze*) that go beyond the bounds of experience (AVII-VIII). On the other hand, he regularly insists that the principles of pure reason must be derived from reason alone (e.g., AXI-XII). This ambiguity is duplicated in Kant's definition of the *a priori*. *A priori* knowledge is absolutely necessary (AXV) because derived from concepts of the understanding independently of all experience (AXII, XVI). On the other hand, as was just noted, our principles must not take us beyond the bounds of experience. The resolution to this second ambiguity is as follows. The principles of *a priori* knowledge arise from the pure reason independently of experience, but they are not known before the individual person has any experience at all (B1). These principles,

which include concepts, categories, rules, schematisms, and Ideas or Ideals, underlie all that is necessary in our knowledge of nature, and are *a priori* in the indicated sense of originating entirely within reason alone. But the principles may be applied only to objects of experience; there is in other words *a priori* knowledge but only of objects encountered via sensation and perception. Stated with more precision and detail, there is *a priori* knowledge of the transcendental conditions for the possibility of objects of experience as well as *a priori* knowledge of those objects themselves, as they conform to the rules of experience, and hence as they are objects of scientific knowledge. This is the resolution of the first difficulty.

Kant regularly emphasizes that his conception of the *a priori*, or more broadly his entire conception of critical philosophy, is modeled after the Copernican "turn" by which modern mathematical and experimental science reverses the classical perspective according to which the mind is subordinated to its objects. Instead, the objects must be subordinated to the mind (BXI-XII). This means that the mind applies its *a priori* principles to the *Vorstellungen* or representations of sensuous impressions in order to construct objects of experience (B1). It is already obvious that the existence as well as the cognition, and this in the dual sense of perception and understanding, are all dependent upon the *a priori* structuring of sensations. *A priori* knowledge is not only of mathematics and natural laws (BXVII-XVIII), but of the conditions for the possibility and knowability of the empirical objects that are covered by mathematical statements of natural laws. Reason has insight only into that which she herself produces in accord with her projects (BXIII) and introduces (*hineinlegt*) into nature (BXIV). Knowledge of the principles underlying mathematics and the laws of Newtonian physics is identical with knowledge of the *a priori* structure of principles, concepts, categories, etc., introduced through its own activity, independent of all experience, by the mind. The production of *a priori* knowledge is also the production of the world of experience concerning which we possess *a priori* knowledge.

Despite Kant's criticism of metaphysicians whose principles go beyond experience, and despite his assurance that he (like Newton)

makes no hypotheses (AXV), it is obvious that his definition of *a priori* principles goes entirely beyond experience in the following precise sense. The critical philosophy, exactly like the modern scientific procedure that Kant describes as his paradigm, is a *hypothesis* about the ground of the possibility of *a priori* knowledge. Kant regularly takes it for granted that we possess *a priori* knowledge, i.e., that the truths of mathematics and natural science are apodictic or absolutely certain, and that this in turn can be explained if we assume that apodicticity is derived from the *a priori* contribution of the activity of cognition or thought. In other words, Kant does not derive his acquaintance with synthetic *a priori* judgments from experience and then go on to determine their origin. He asserts that our knowledge of mathematics and natural science is in its principles both synthetic and *a priori*. Since experience, understood as what the mind discerns in its role as subordinate or conforming to the objects that it encounters, is insufficient to validate *a priori* knowledge, Kant then assumes that this validity is to be sought in the mind, which accordingly must subordinate its objects to its own demands or projects. In short, the procedures of mathematics and physics have not merely achieved practical success, but they impress us with their certainty and necessity. We must, therefore, extend these procedures to the domain of philosophy (BXVI). Kant's entire enterprise is thus made to rest from the outset upon the hypothesis that philosophy *ought to be* a science, and furthermore, that science itself consists of synthetic *a priori* judgments. It is not simply the case that experience must conform to the *a priori* principles of pure reason. It is rather the case that human beings produce or constitute experience by the application of the *a priori* principles of pure reason. This goes beyond the so-called Copernican revolution in modern science, as a moment's reflection will make clear.

Even if we follow Kant's own description of the Copernican turn, it is not the case that the scientist produces the world of experience, and therefore the empirical object as a cognisable structure, through the conceptual structuring of sensuous impressions. Copernicus never claimed to produce the planets, that is, to bring them into existence by positioning them via perception within the

network of the laws of experience, but rather to have discovered the laws of planetary motion by a process of idealisation in which he constructed a mathematical model, based upon his observations of the motions of independently existing bodies which are perceivable prior to the construction of the model by which they are to be explained.

For Platonists like Galileo, Copernicus, and Kepler, and for religious Christians like Newton, the eternal laws of mathematical motion are not imposed onto the cosmos by the activity of human cognition. These laws are human discoveries of the ratios of motion intrinsic to nature, whether in itself or as created by God. In discovering these laws, it is no doubt necessary for human beings to employ their speculative imagination as well as their mathematical skills, in addition to the usual reliance upon instruments of observation. But it is the laws that are constructed, not the objects or the heavenly bodies, or their motions. And the construction of the laws is not the same as the constitution by the activity of cognition of the conditions for the possibility of our experience of heavenly bodies. The laws, in the form of equations, express conditions but do not *produce* them.

Kant's interpretation of the procedures of modern science is much closer to the theories of sense-perception, according to which the object of perceptual experience is a construction from sensations as accommodated to the perceptual and cognitive apparatus of the human physiological and psychological systems.

Theories of this sort may be divided very generally into two groups. In the first group, it is maintained that objects in themselves consist of atoms in the void, distributions of energy, force-fields, or some version of ultimate physical nature, but are modified through the aforementioned human perceptual and cognitive apparatus. On this account, a conceptual understanding of the actual physical nature is not itself the constituting or projecting of that nature but its discovery by means of theories, observations, technical instruments, and so on, all of which enable us to discriminate between the primary or actual properties of physical reality and the secondary or psychological properties of objects of human perception.

In other words: the object of empirical perception is produced, but not the object of science. Knowledge of the laws of physics is then knowledge of things in themselves, and this in turn serves as the foundation for scientific knowledge of appearances or psychological objects. The second and much more radical set of theories maintains that even the ostensibly "primary" properties, or the underlying substratum of atoms in the void, distributions of energy, force-fields, and so on, are themselves "appearances" produced by the activity of perceptual cognition itself. But since the activity of perceptual cognition is knowable only as an appearance, one can hardly refer to its principles as *a priori*, necessary, or apodictic, nor can knowledge of these principles be given the status of transcendental knowledge in the Kantian sense of the necessary conditions for the possibility of any cognisable (and so perceptible) object.

What precisely is Kant claiming when he asserts that philosophy should take the Copernican turn and follow the procedures of modern science? He certainly rejects the traditional thesis (as I shall call it for convenience) that empirical entities are accessible in their intrinsic natures to human intelligence, which can know these entities by conforming to them or by somehow "becoming" them (i.e., assuming their forms or essences). But as I have just noted, he goes considerably beyond the viewpoint of classical modern science, as exemplified by his hero, Newton, to the effect that we can know the underlying truth of the nature and motions of physical entities, as distinguished from their perceptual appearances. Kant claims that thinking *produces* the empirical object as an object of scientific knowledge. Atoms, motions, forces, and so on, are thus as much products of human cognition as are colors, smells, and sounds. But none of these is regarded in a Nietzschean sense as simply a contingent perspective projected by the interplay of two random collocations of forces, one cognitive and the other cognized.

As is well-known, Kant assumes that the logic, mathematics, and hence the laws of mechanics are eternally valid for the universe as a totality. This eternal validity, however, arises not from our discovery of natural or supernatural laws, but because of our *imposition* of the laws of reason onto the sensuous impressions

that ostensibly constitute the sole "given" but which possess no perceptual or cognisable nature in themselves. The laws of reason must be attributed to the activity of cognition, because only in this way can we explain what we take to be their *a priori* and eternally necessary status.

This introductory survey suffices to indicate that Kant's transcendental philosophy is most similar to the doctrine of primary and secondary attributes as propounded in the Seventeenth Century, but with a crucial modification. He attributes the primary attributes, not to the entities of knowledge in themselves, but to the activity of cognition. This activity produces, not just secondary or psychological objects and experiences, but also primary objects and hence scientific experience as well. On the other hand, this "production" is not empirical or immanent but "transcendental." As such, it must be distinguished from psychologistic empiricism or Nietzschean perspectivism on the one hand, and from Absolute Idealism on the other.

The world of scientific experience is not a subjective perspective of the individual subject, nor is it the inexplicably reflexive manifestation of transient formal structure by a Nietzschean Chaos. But neither is it a world projected by an absolute ego or divine Spirit that acts through the medium of sentient finite beings such as ourselves. Kant's transcendental conditions are *logical* conditions; they are intended to express how it is possible for us to experience our world. The conditions are eternal, not in the sense that they are eternally actualized by a divine creator or absolute ego, but in the sense that they determine how a world consisting of conceptually shaped sensations will be experienced (i.e., known), whenever and wherever creatures like us arise. When we reflect upon the process by which we find ourselves in the world, if we reason correctly, it is precisely Kant's transcendental conditions or *a priori* principles of pure reason that we will discover, and *nothing else*.

This means that the traditional notion of a thing as accessible in its essence or form is replaced by Kant with the new notion of the transcendental conditions or principles of pure reason. One cannot call these conditions or principles the ultimate stratum of reality

because they are not *res* but rules that must be obeyed by the activity of cognizing *res*. On the other hand, they are not human perspectives or secondary manifestations of some underlying and unknowable primary set of conditions. Kant intends his system of transcendental philosophy as the final, definitive, and in all essential points complete statement of what it is for human beings to experience a world of rationally determined objects; Kant claims to have defined forever the subject-object structure of experience.

The spatio-temporal world is the horizon of the network of rule-bound objects of experience, constituted from the conceptual modification of sensations in accord with *a priori* principles. These objects are the objects of perception, as distinguished from what I shall call the simulacra of sensation, or in other words the entities of private and perspectival subjectivity, dreams, fantasies, hallucinations: in general, the ostensible "objects" as understood by the laws of association of the empirical psychologists of the British school of Locke and Hume (e.g., B119, B127–28). The object of perception is not antecedent to and as it were the already constituted theme or locus of scientific knowledge; it is itself constituted as an existing *res* thanks to the application to sensation of the rules, concepts, etc. by which the object of cognition is cognized.

We therefore have the following situation. Kant's distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal, although it in no way denies the continuous or fully actual existence of an external and comprehensive world of beings, renders that world inaccessible to cognitive thinking. The human being does not find himself or herself in an already existing world, confronted by beings that exist independently of his or her attempts to perceive and to know them. The world as the horizon of existing *res* is "projected" or "opened" by the activity of perceptual cognition, in accordance with the transcendental conditions or rules of pure reason. Let me emphasize the implication here: the opening of the world is not a separate act, antecedent to the perceptual cognition of *res*. It is one and the same act that opens the world and that posits the existing *res* as objects of scientific experience. The world is not an independent "container" of beings hidden within its depths: it is the totality of the field

regulated by the conditions and principles of pure reason, a field that is actualized by cognition. This world is not actualized by a transcendent God or by an absolute ego. It can only be actualized by the thinking subject, i.e., by the individual human being. Whereas the conditions to which all individual human beings are subjected are universal and eternally valid, these conditions remain possibilities until some individual person actualizes them by engaging in thought.

But how *do* we engage in thought? Not by thinking a world, of course, but rather by thinking some definite being or (in Kant's vocabulary) object, or at most some definite interconnection of objects of such-and-such a kind. Whereas the spatio-temporal conditions of experience always hold for any possible thinking (and *a fortiori*, perceiving) of a determinate object, it makes no sense to say that the spatio-temporal conditions are actual, i.e., that the world exists, even though no human being is thinking a determinate object. Remember that it is not the conditions, and hence not space-time, but thus not even the world, that exists. Only objects of perception exist. In order for the world to be actual, someone must be thinking something definite. But each individual person can think only the objects of his or her personal experience. If you think a table and I do not, let us say because I am asleep and not thinking anything but at most dreaming, or because I am allowing my mind to wander and not positing any object in particular, then you have actualized the world in which that object takes on its rational structure as an element within the interconnected network of rule-governed objects that constitute scientific experience. You are then resident in that world, and if you should turn your attention to my sleeping or supine figure, I may be resident as an object in your world. But I am not the subject of this or any other world until I posit an object.

It follows that even if at every moment of time someone is cognizing something, the most that can be said is that there are as many actual worlds as there are cognizing persons. To claim that there is just one world, the horizon of all objects constituted by all subjects, is inevitably to claim that the existence or actuality of the one comprehensive world is independent of and logically as well as

ontologically antecedent to each and every cognition by a single subject of a single object. But this is not Kant's claim at all. Kant of course claims that the world is always actualized in the same way; but it cannot be actualized apart from the activity of thinking. And as long as that thinking is not focused as the positing of objects of such-and-such a kind, it amounts to daydreaming, and thus to the opening at best of a fantasy world, a world of private impressions, including those of entities that do not obey Kant's rules concerning spatio-temporal intuitions.

Strange as it may seem, Kant's doctrine has the following drastic consequence. Only that segment of my world is actual that is determined by the actuality of the specific objects I am now cognizing. The conditions for actualizing subsequently attended-to sectors of what will then be a new or expanded sector of my world remain always the same. But the world of existing objects changes with the focus of my cognitive attention. If I am now thinking the causal connection between the sunlight and the rising temperature of a stone, then the sun and the stone exist, and the conditions for their existence are actualized. But the same cannot be said for the environment within which I am thinking the causal connection between sunlight and the stone. This environment is either a "rhapsody" of impressions, or a sheer possibility, awaiting determination in the first case and actualization in the second.

An object exists only when I posit it via perception within the network of rule-governed objects making up experience in Kant's technical sense of the term. What is not posited does not exist. But what does not exist cannot be said to have a position within the network of experience. Differently stated, the network is actual only so far as cognition extends its positing and determining activity. Beyond that point is indeterminateness and/or possibility. But a possible world is not a horizon of actual objects. It is not actually a coherent integration of the particular chain of experience that I am currently cognizing, into a comprehensive and unified world. Thus for example the thesis of the continuity and regularity of nature is a condition for the possibility of a world, but one which can be actualized only here and now by the positing of an object, i.e., by the

synthesis of sensations and concepts that is necessary for perception and cognition. I can of course actualize that world there and later, but only by positing some other object, again in isolation from what is elsewhere mere impression or sheer possibility.

The world of experience, and thus the world of perceived objects, is the world that is posited by the subject, and this means the individual subject, in obedience to the transcendental rules governing all subjects. But no individual subject can actualize the world as the comprehensive horizon of the perceived objects of all subjects. Kant of course wishes to avoid anything like this chaos of continuously appearing and disappearing subjective perspectives. But how can he do this unless he makes the world actual as the ever present horizon within which positing occurs, and indeed as actual regardless of whether any positing occurs? And if he takes this step, how will he exclude the possibility, even the likelihood, that there are entities which may be potential objects for some not-yet thinking subject, but which are actually resident in the world regardless of whether anyone posits them or not?

I repeat: *actually* resident, not potential or possible objects. For how could I perceive a possible object? And if perception is bringing into existence, how can this genesis occur except within an already actual world? If the genesis is the actualization of the world as well as of the object, then the dilemma recurs of how there can be one comprehensive world as the horizon of all positings, past, present, and future. I add that this problem is not met by Kant's "proofs" of the existence of the external world, i.e., by his ostensible refutation of solipsism or Idealism. The problem I have spelled out has nothing to do with solipsism but rather with the nature or status of the external world, namely, as actual or as potential, and further, as a world either of psychological sensations or of empirical objects in Kant's full sense of the expression. The most Kant has proved is that there must be something that endures outside of my changing perceptions. He has nothing to say about its nature. Otherwise put, Kant might even claim that he has proved that I as object exist in the worlds of other subjects. But he has not established the status of this world as the always and comprehensively actual horizon of

subjective positings of objects. In fact, as unknowable, the "external" world is itself at most a condition for the possibility of each actual world, but not the actual world itself. Kant is the direct ancestor of possible worlds metaphysics.

I now close this long parenthesis, which was intended to sketch a fundamental problem intrinsic to Kant's claim to have applied the Copernican turn, as practiced in the natural and mathematical sciences, to the enterprise of philosophy. I have argued that Kant is neither a Copernican nor a Nietzschean, and certainly not an Idealist. No doubt it is correct to say that he is just what he is—a Kantian. But what is it to be a Kantian? Presumably it is to assert that the *a priori* structure of the world is imposed via the synthetic unity of apperception onto the manifold of intuition, or in other words it is to assert that all synthesis, and hence all order and intelligibility as well as perceivable existence, is a product of the activity of cognition, which must follow the rules formulated by Kant. In this case, as I have argued, the world is actualized by cognition, hence by a judgment about an object of experience, that is to say, about a perception. This being so, *a* world is actualized each time a subject thinks a synthetic *a priori* judgment about an empirical object. Looked at from the other angle, the object of perception is the same as the object of cognition. And this is the point that I wish to pursue.

Scientific laws and mathematical theorems exhibit *a priori* knowledge; transcendental knowledge is knowledge of the conditions of *a priori* knowledge of objects, hence not of objects themselves (B25). Nevertheless, the point of transcendental knowledge is to explain how *a priori* knowledge of objects is possible. In order for Kant's explanation to be of any interest, it must demonstrate first that there is *a priori* knowledge of the objects of experience, and so that there are synthetic *a priori* judgments. But second, in order to carry out this first requirement, Kant must show that the transcendental conditions are capable of providing us with *a priori* knowledge of actual, i.e., empirically encountered objects.

In fact, Kant does not demonstrate the former but merely asserts it (B4–5), although he does argue (unconvincingly) that mathematical

propositions are synthetic. Even if they were, however, this would not make them *a priori*, in Kant's sense of eternally valid independent of any experience whatsoever. But this is not my major concern. I am primarily interested in the arguments by which Kant contends that the transcendental conditions contribute the *a priori* structure of rationality to objects of experience, while at the same time leaving them contingent. In different but related terms, I am concerned with the Kantian claim that the conditions for the *possibility* of an object are also actualized as its rational form or structure.

A dog, for example, is plainly a possible object of experience. It must therefore conform to the conditions for the possibility of objects of experience. But the actual perception of a particular existing dog is not only the actualization of *a priori* conditions; it is also the synthesis of empirical conditions. The actual dog seems to be both the actualization of transcendental conditions and of empirical conditions, yet, as we shall see, the transcendental conditions contribute nothing to the actual empirical perception, whereas the empirical conditions leave the perception entirely indeterminate, thereby contradicting our perceptual experience. Nowhere does Kant explain how I perceive this particular dog, i.e., this particular object. Since the existence of the dog is nevertheless attributed to the positioning of the act of perception, we end up with an *indeterminate object of existence*, which is nonsense. The transcendental conditions may provide us with the possibility of perceiving a particular object in general, but Kant's doctrine makes it impossible to explain the fact of perception.

In the *Introduction*, Kant distinguishes between pure and empirical knowledge. Pure knowledge is both universal and *a priori*; empirical knowledge is a composite of "what we receive through impressions and of what our own power of knowledge... contributes from itself" (B1). The impressions are mere sensations which contain no formal determinations whatsoever; even their spatial or temporal nature is given to them by the pure forms of intuition (see B35 on extension and figure). This means that every real determination or predicate, in other words, the objectivity of the object of experience, is derived from the power of knowledge itself

and from nothing else. Empirical knowledge, although not entirely pure, is nevertheless pure with respect to the objectivity, and hence also to both the existence and the intelligibility of the object. There can accordingly be no perceptual experience apart from the object-producing activity of the power of knowledge.

On the other hand, the sensuous or contingent and impure content of the object is lacking in determinateness, which it receives from the power of knowledge. But this power cannot furnish an empirical form to the object. What we take in ordinary experience as the form of the dog is not contributed to the empirical object by the power of knowledge. What this power contributes is the determinations arising from fulfillment of the conditions for the possibility of being an object in general. But if the form of the dog comes neither from the pure nor from the impure component of the empirical object, *what is its origin*?

III. The Transcendental Aesthetic

Kant begins the *Aesthetic* with a series of definitions. Objects (*Gegenstände*) are given directly to intuition (*Anschauung*). The receptive capacity to acquire representations (*Vorstellungen*) through the manner in which we are affected by objects is sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*). Thanks to sensibility, objects are given to us, and this alone is what counts as intuition. Kant is of course referring here to the registering of "objects," understood informally as things in themselves, on the pure forms of intuition, space and time (cf. B60–61). The effect of this "registration" upon sensibility, i.e., upon the pure forms of intuition, is called sensation (*Empfindung*). This is the only point at which the mind is in contact with things in themselves, and even here it is by way of a modification of the things in themselves by the *a priori* forms of intuition. But the objects are thought by concepts furnished entirely by the understanding. In sum: an object of cognition is constructed by the mind from two sources, intuition or sensibility, which furnishes sensations, and understanding, which furnishes concepts. Whereas neither sensations nor concepts are acquired directly from things in themselves, the sensations are modifications of the effect of those things upon the mind (B34).

Kant then makes a point of considerable importance for our investigation. "That intuition which relates to the object through sensation is called empirical. The indeterminate object of an empirical intuition is called *Erscheinung*" (B34). Let me first emphasize that *Gegenstand* is used ambiguously by Kant. Strictly speaking, there are no objects until the synthesis of sensations and concepts has taken place; the object is a phenomenon or appearance in the technical sense of that which has been produced in the manner just outlined. An object is posited by a subject, not received from the external world as independent of the activity of cognition. But more important is the question of what Kant means by an indeterminate object (*Der unbestimmte Gegenstand*). Since determinations are supplied by concepts, and these in turn issue from the understanding, one is led to assume that an indeterminate object is neither simply sensation (or what empiricists used to call "sense data") nor an object of cognition. It is something that *seems to be* an object, or that may become an object once it is determined by the understanding.

This interpretation is supported by a later passage at B94. Kant says there that "Thinking is knowledge through concepts. Concepts however refer, as predicates of possible judgments, to some representation of a still indeterminate object." An indeterminate object is one concerning which no predicates have been attributed. It therefore cannot be understood as an object of such-and-such a kind, which is to say that it is not yet an object of experience understood as the network of conceptual connections supplied by the transcendental functions of reason. It is very important to notice that Kant does not refer to the "perception" (*Wahrnehmung*) of an indeterminate object. This would be impossible on Kant's usual or official doctrine, according to which perception is literally a "taking to be true" or positing as an actual object of the perceiver's experience the constituted or determined synthesis of sensation and concepts.

Indeterminate objects, I suggest, are the objects of perception, not of the Kantian but of the Lockean and Humean philosophy, which are explained by psychological laws of association rather than by *a priori* concepts. But the point is still quite ambiguous, because there

are no pure or *a priori* concepts of the determinate forms of empirical objects. There must in other words be two kinds of predicates, those belonging to an object as object, and empirical predicates. The former come from the understanding. But Kant never explains where the latter originate, despite his reference to the schematism (B180) of the imagination, which I shall examine later.

We do not need to examine Kant's exposition of space and time, except to note that they are the forms of outer and inner sense, respectively (B49–50). Kant distinguishes between *a priori* intuition of the properties of space and time, from which pure synthetic *a priori* propositions may be derived (B56), and empirical intuition, namely, *a posteriori* knowledge derived from sensation (B60). In the transcendental deduction, Kant again refers to empirical intuition as follows: "under *synthesis of apprehension* I understand the combination of a manifold in an empirical intuition, through which perception, i.e., empirical consciousness of the intuition (as *Erscheinung*) is possible" (B160). He gives as an example the case in which "I make the empirical intuition of a house into a perception by apprehension [in the 4th edition, apperception] of [that house] as a manifold" (B162).

We recall that intuition contains sensations but no concepts; empirical intuitions cannot yield in themselves a perception because they contain no synthesis of apprehension, namely, a synthesis with respect to the unity of a sequence of temporal moments, which thus enables this sequence to constitute a single temporal intuition (A99) that is in accord with the categories (B161). The empirical intuition, taken in itself, also contains no synthesis of apperception, "which is intellectual and is contained entirely *a priori* in the category. It is one and the same spontaneity which in the first case under the name of imagination, in the second of understanding, produces a combination (*Verbindung*) in the manifold of intuition" (B162, note *b*).

Prior to the dual syntheses of apprehension and apperception, the empirical intuition of a house is not yet a perception, nor can we be said to possess an empirical concept of the house through it alone. The synthesis of apprehension functions via the imagination to prepare the moments of intuition or to make them a unified intuition

of a given consciousness. The synthesis of apperception as it were subsumes this unified intuition under the category, or as we should more accurately say, under the categories required to render determinate the objectivity of the object that corresponds to our empirical perception. The empirical intuition of a house is again revealed to be a quasi-object or association of sensations, which may be called an indeterminate object (although Kant does not use that phrase here). But how are we to explain the empirical concept of a house? This can be derived neither from intuition nor from understanding.

Attribution of the synthesis of apprehension to the imagination raises the possibility that the so-called "empirical concept" is not a concept at all but an image. If this were so, then the conceptual structure of the perception of a house would be categorial, i.e., it would serve somehow to bind the image, or synthesis of empirical intuitions that we call "house," to the conditions determining a perceptual object as an element of experience. In this case, the "identity" of the image would be purely imaginary; as I stated earlier, what we mean by a house would be a matter of interpretation, not of perception in the sense of an objective grasping of a definite identity. This kind of indefiniteness is required by Kant's view that what it means to be a natural object is a function of the progress of empirical science. But the same is not required in the case of perceptions of artifacts. And the question remains in both cases: what is the source of the definiteness of the perception as a perception of this brick two-story Georgian house standing here before me?

As it turns out, the "empirical concept" is not an image but something else. Kant discusses this point at B176 ff. under the title "The Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding," a passage which we have already noticed but to which we must now return. Objects can be subsumed under concepts only if the representation of the former is homogeneous with the latter. "Thus the empirical concept of a *plate* is homogeneous with the pure geometrical concept of a *circle*, in that the roundness that is thought in the first, is intuited in the second" (B176). In other words, we are enabled to think the shape of the plate as round because of *a priori* intuition of circularity. This of course in no way explains how we think the circular object

as a plate rather than as something else having the same shape. All it establishes is that the empirical intuition is somehow shaped by our access to pure intuition.

Pure concepts of the understanding have no such homogeneity with empirical or any type of intuitions. Categories are applied to intuitions thanks to the mediation of some third thing which is homogeneous (in some respect, I add) with both the category and the *Erscheinung* (as Kant refers here to the intuited material that requires subsumption). This third thing, which is pure (void of all empirical content), has the double nature of being intellectual in one respect and sensible in another. "Such a *Vorstellung* is the *transcendental schema*" (B177). The transcendental schema is a transcendental determination of time, itself understood as an *a priori* manifold of the pure intuition of inner sense. "Now a transcendental determination of time is homogeneous with the category (which constitutes its unity) in so far as it is universal and rests upon an *a priori* rule. It is on the other hand homogeneous with the *Erscheinung*, in so far as time is contained in each empirical representation of a manifold" (B177–78).

What does this mean? As the sequel explains, the schemata are *a priori* determinations of time in accordance with rules, of which there are four, and which pertain to (1) time-series, (2) time-content, (3) time-order, and (4) the scope of time in respect to all possible objects (B184–85). Thus for example the schema of causality is "the Real, which, whenever it is posited, something else always follows. It consists therefore in the succession of the manifold, in so far as it is subject to a rule" (B183). I believe that there is something fundamentally wrong with this explanation. Time is a pure form of intuition, namely, of intuition as inner sense. It may be "homogeneous" (*Gleichartig*) with a category, but it certainly cannot be, or be contained as a part within, a category. Kant must explain how categories, i.e., pure concepts of the understanding, enter into consciousness understood as intuition or inner sense. In other words, he must explain how consciousness, and so thinking, arises from the unification of concepts and the forms of intuition, and thanks to that unification, of the further unification of concepts and sensations.

But categories cannot combine with time through the mediation of time itself. A transcendental schema, however, is itself *already* a mediation of concepts and time, as is obvious from the fact that it rests upon an *a priori* rule. Kant's explanation of the transcendental schema thus begs the question.

This is not all that could be said about the inadequacies of the doctrine of the transcendental schema. I note only one point that bears directly upon my main concern. The schema of causality is said to be the Real upon which, whenever it is posited, something else follows. This statement contains two problems. First: it is not necessary to refer to time when formulating the principle of causality. Kant introduces temporality into the schema by referring to "the Real." This raises the second problem; the Real can only refer to a *res*, and this in turn refers to an existing object of perception as determined by real predicates. Reality is defined by perception, not by a transcendental determination of time in accordance with a rule.

Since time is the form of inner sense, one can see how time is homogeneous with appearance or "the empirical representation of the manifold," by which Kant presumably means empirical intuition, not perception, since the latter functions by means of concepts, whereas the whole point of the transcendental schema is to enable concepts to unite with intuition, and in particular, with sensation. But I can find no answer to the question of how time is homogeneous with concepts. Of course, one could say that since we are able to analyze our experience into time and concepts, the two must be homogeneous. But this is entirely compatible with the thesis that concepts are themselves initially temporal, or that they are ingredient in the objects of experience, and not *a priori* determinations of the understanding. It is also compatible with Platonism and with Aristotelianism; in other words, it is compatible with any philosophical doctrine whatsoever.

I began this line of inquiry in order to discover the source of the perceived form of the empirical object. It is clear from what has just been said that this form cannot be supplied by a transcendental schema. There must then be some other kind of schema, which is presumably immanent or derived from the imagination's synthesis

of apprehension, a synthesis, we recall, of time. Putting my previous criticism of the doctrine of the transcendental schema to one side, there may then be two types of schemata, one that applies to *a priori* concepts and the other to empirical intuition. Let us see.

Pure concepts of the understanding are impossible unless objects (*Gegenstände*) are given for them (B178). "Object" here must mean "empirical intuition" or quasi-object (indeed, "indeterminate object"), since there are no objects apart from concepts. Kant fluctuates throughout the *Critique* between two locutions, according to which (1) objects are "given" to concepts, and (2) objects are constructed from sensations by concepts. Sometimes he hints that (1) refers to *Gegenstände* in the sense of indeterminate objects, whereas (2) refers to *Objekte* or perceived objects of rational experience; but often he gives no such indications. I believe that this is something more than Kant's famous "imprecision" of terminology, an imprecision, incidentally, that is inexcusable in the articulation of a doctrine that rests upon as many terminological distinctions as the treatises of any Scholastic.

"Experience" and "empirical" are themselves equivocal terms in Kant, as we have already seen. On the one hand, they refer to "pre-critical" experience in the sense of British psychologism; on the other hand, they refer to the rule-governed structure of conceptually determined and scientifically accessible experience. Underlying this equivocation, in my opinion, is the fact that objects are not positings of subjects but are instead encountered by perception (however complex is the inner structure of that function), which then so to speak hands them over to the understanding for the purposes of conceptual analysis. Since the empirical form (to which the empirical concept corresponds) of the object is not furnished by sensation or by pure concepts, if it is not furnished by the schemata of the synthesis of apprehension, then it must be contained within the empirical object itself, independently of *a priori* concepts and mere sensation. We thus turn to the consideration of the second type of schema.

The procedure of understanding by way of schemata is called the schematism of pure understanding. But schemata are always produced by the imagination (B179). I note in passing that it is

accordingly the imagination that rules over the synthesis of concepts and sensations resulting in the production of perceptible objects or existing *res*. But the synthesis of imagination (e.g., of apprehension) aims, not at any particular intuition, but only "at unity in the determination of sensibility." It follows that the schema cannot be an image, since an image must be particular, i.e., a "picture" of something in particular, such as a configuration of five points in space or a triangle. The schema of a concept is rather "the representation of a universal procedure of the imagination in creating an image for a concept" (B180). Again I call attention to the ambiguity of Kant's terminology; he uses "representation" (*Vorstellung*) in a wide variety of senses, including that of representations of sensibility. It seems to mean for him any modification of consciousness possessing sufficient definiteness to be identified.

The schema of a triangle is not the image of a triangle but a rule, i.e., not a picture but a thought; pictures are incapable of the universality required to cover every possible triangle, "It is a rule of the synthesis of the imagination with respect to pure forms in space" *ibid*. Now in the case of a triangle, as it happens, it is actually possible to see what Kant means, since there exist discursive definitions of triangles. But the situation is unfortunately much more obscure in the case of empirical objects: "Much less does an object of experience [*ein Gegenstand der Erfahrung*: note my previous remark on the equivocity of Kant's terminology] attain to the empirical concept, but the latter refers itself always immediately to the schema of the imagination as a rule for the determination of our intuition, compatible with a certain universal concept" (*ibid*).

Every phrase of this passage is ambiguous. What Kant presumably means is that the empirical intuition, understood as a quasi-object, and so as an indeterminate association of sensations, cannot by itself be subsumed under an empirical concept, i.e., a concept of an empirical object, such as (to take Kant's own example) a dog. I would myself express the point somewhat differently. In keeping with Kant's vague definitions, it looks as if the indeterminate association of sensations that we are accustomed to identify as the perception of a dog, cannot explain in themselves how they are

organized or rendered determinate and thereby capable of being identified by us as a dog. My revision is based upon the fact that, to this point, there is no empirical concept of the dog; i.e., none can be obtained from Kant's definitions and explanations.

The empirical concept comes neither from pure *a priori* concepts nor from sensations. It is therefore impossible to understand how the empirical concept can refer itself to the schema of the imagination. What Kant might want to claim is that the schema of the imagination itself *produces* the empirical concept of the dog. But this would be incompatible with his definition of a schema as a universal rule. Nevertheless, surprisingly enough, this is very close to what Kant does say: "The concept of the dog signifies a rule, according to which my imagination can produce a general sketch of the shape [*Gestalt*] of a four-footed animal, without being restricted to any particular shape that my experience furnishes me, or to any possible image [*Bild*] that I can exhibit *in concreto*" (*ibid*).

The concept of the dog is not a concept of a dog, namely, of the particular mammal called "dog," with a determinate *Gestalt* or set of *Gestalten*, a distinctive anatomy, set of psychological capacities, etc., an animal readily identifiable by almost any human being at almost any time known to us. In a circumlocution that almost reminds us of Frege, Kant says that the concept of a dog refers to a rule, not to dogs. But the rule he specifies is obviously applicable to any four-footed animal; the "sketch" it produces is so vague as to be "universally" applicable. It thereby misses the mark, and fails to be a rule for identifying, let alone for conceiving, of a dog. Let me underline this last point. As defined by Kant, the concept of the dog is incapable of enabling us to conceive of the dog, or of any individual dog.

The concept of the dog is thus a schema or rule produced by the imagination; to the extent that we possess anything resembling a concept of the dog, it has been produced by the schema. The dog, who is a fair representative of any empirical object, thus turns out to be *an imaginary being*. In other words, empirical concepts not only do not exist, but if they did exist, would not be concepts, nor is the empirical object to which they ostensibly refer an actual object.

IV. The Doctrine of Transcendental Elements

At B376, in a section entitled "Of Ideas in General," Kant defines perception (*Wahrnehmung*) as follows. He is in the process of giving a summary of the stages of types of representations (*Vorstellungen*), culminating in the Ideas of reason.

> The genus is representation in general (*repraesentatio*). Under it is the representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A perception that is related merely to the subject as a modification of its state is sensation (*sensatio*), an objective perception is knowledge (*cognitio*). This is either intuition or concept (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former refers immediately to the *Gegenstand* and is singular; the latter [refers to the *Gegenstand*] mediately, by way of a characteristic that can be common to many things. The concept is either empirical or pure, and the pure concept, insofar as it has its origin merely in the understanding (not in a pure image of sensation) is called *notio*. A concept made up of notions which transcends the possibility of experience, is the Idea or the concept of reason.

This diaeresis is puzzling since it seems to move from the general to the particular, and then back again to the general. A *perceptio* or representation with consciousness might easily refer to any modification of the mind, given Kant's equivocal use of *Vorstellung*. In any case, Kant divides *perceptio* into two sub-classes, one of which, sensation, must refer to a private modification of consciousness, and so to what might be a fantasy, dream, or illusion as well as a quasi-object or indeterminate object in the sense of some informal assemblage of sensations that have not yet been determined by concepts, and so not yet registered within the network of rational experience. Sensation-perceptions do not connote an existing object. "An objective perception is knowledge." This statement requires a commentary.

First: the pre-conceptualized content of subjective or private perception is governed by the Lockean or Humean psychological laws of sensation (B118 f., A112–14). Addition of the concept (or structure of pertinent concepts) results in a judgment. As Kant (too briefly) says, a judgment is the subsumption of a *Gegenstand* under a concept (B304). But the *Gegenstand* is itself the result of

the subsumption of a unified intuition (i.e., unified by syntheses of the imagination) under a concept (B74 ff.). The understanding can make no use of concepts "other than that it judges through them" (B93–94). "The judgment is thus the mediated knowledge of a *Gegenstand*, and so a representation of a representation of it" (*ibid*). In other words, the unity of the perceived object is furnished by exactly the same operations (by the coincidence of the syntheses of apprehension and apperception, as well as by the schematizing of the pure concept: in addition to passages already cited, see B2 23–24) as supply the object of empirical knowledge via a judgment. To constitute an object is to judge or to determine it, hence to raise it from possibility to actuality by subsuming it under a universal, i.e., the predicate of a judgment (B94).

It follows directly that there is no difference between perceiving an object of experience and judging it (knowing it through the determination of real predicates). Intuitive perceptual knowledge is knowledge of the properties of the pure forms of intuition, i.e., of space and time. Conceptual perceptual knowledge refers to the object, not directly, as in the case of intuition, but mediately, by way of a concept (or structure of concepts, as Kant never remembers to say). Since the perception of sensation is entirely private, it has no truth-value and no reference to objects. We conclude that objective perception and knowledge of the object of experience are all identical with, or inseparable aspects of, the one united process by which the object is constituted, i.e., posited as existing. This being so, there can be no false judgments of perception; every false judgment is at most the judgment of an illusion, fantasy, or dream (cf. B520–21). At most, but not even this, since judgments employ concepts, whereas private perception, i.e., sensation, is independent of conceptual determination.

Second: In a previously cited passage (B521), Kant says that appearances are only actual, i.e., can no longer be taken for private perceptions of sensation, "within perception, which is in fact nothing but the actuality of an empirical representation, i.e., appearance." I underline the main point: there is no such objective actuality prior to perception. Perception is not the encounter with an

empirical object; it is the positing of the empirical object as existing. And this positing, as I have said previously, inserts the perceived object into experience as determined "by laws of empirical process." Kant makes these same points in a later passage (B626 ff.), much cited, about the difference between 100 real and imaginary thalers. An existing empirical object is a *res*; its properties are established by real predicates, and so by subsumption under concepts, but its existence or being requires something more than this. We can think anything we like (within the bounds of the principle of non-contradiction); in order to think an existing thing we must also perceive it, namely, think it "as contained within the context of experience as a totality." And this in turn means that being or existence is determined by perception "in accordance with empirical laws" (B628–29). Being is merely the position of a thing as an object of experience. It is a possible object of experience with respect to its real predicates or conceptual determinations. But it is an actual object of existence, thanks to its perceivedness.

So much for the commentary. An objective perception is knowledge. A subjective, i.e., private, perception is in fact sensation, which must be regarded as nothing more than proto- or quasi-perception. Knowledge, to repeat, is either immediate or via intuition; or else it is mediated by concepts. We are concerned with this second type. Concepts, Kant says at B376, are either empirical or pure. But pure concepts are *a priori*, and cannot furnish us with the identifiable and intelligible properties of the empirical object *qua* empirical. These properties are constantly changing (B755–56); the empirical concept "never stands within secure limits" (*ibid*). And again: "In the natural sciences [*Naturkunde*]...there is nothing but an infinity of conjectures, with respect to which no one can ever anticipate certainty, because the natural appearances are *Gegenstände* that are given to us independently of our concepts, to which therefore the key lies, not in us and in our pure thinking, but outside of us, and so in many cases cannot be found; consequently no secure conclusion is to be expected" (B508–09).

Kant is of course referring here, not to mathematical physics in its Newtonian form, but to the applied sciences that seek knowledge of empirical objects. As I have now shown in considerable detail,

however, there are no empirical objects, if to be an empirical object is to be constituted from sensations by concepts and inserted into the network of empirical laws that constitutes the orderliness and rationality of human experience. This shocking conclusion, which is bound to enrage convinced Kantians, follows directly from Kant's own statements, and from his failure to explain the source or nature of empirical concepts.

By way of conclusion, I will summarize the pivotal difficulty in Kant's doctrine of perception. We find two different tendencies in Kant's treatment of the perceptual object. On the one hand, perception seems to be very close to sensation; on the other hand, it is clearly distinguished from sensation by the determining function of concepts. Consider the following two sample passages. At B103, Kant defines synthesis in general as the act of connecting diverse representations to one another and grasping their manifold in knowledge. A synthesis is pure if it is given *a priori* in intuition; accordingly, it has no empirical content. An empirical synthesis must be one that contains sensations suitable for unification by concepts into an object; but prior to such a unification, the material in this synthesis cannot itself be objective. Syntheses are the "mere" work of imagination. "However, to bring this synthesis to concepts, is the function of the understanding, by which it first creates knowledge for us in a genuine sense" (*ibid*). This latter synthesis must be that of apperception, as the former is the synthesis of apprehension. We recall that these two are in conformity, and that it is the synthesis of apperception that brings the "perception" to concepts (B162).

The net result of B103 together with B162 is inconsistent. On the one hand, since there is no concept in apprehension, there cannot be any object there; as a result, there cannot be perception but only empirical intuition, i.e., sensation. On the other hand, Kant identifies the synthesis of apprehension as perception (*Wahrnehmung*) at B162. Just before this, at B161, we read that "all synthesis, through which perception itself is possible, stands under the categories, and since experience is knowledge through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions for the possibility of experience, and are thus valid *a priori* for all objects of experience."

We might therefore want to understand Kant as follows. Apprehension is perception, but not yet experience. Experience is the categorially connected network of perceptions. But what is a pre-experiential perception? It cannot be a private sensation or the apprehension of an indeterminate object. In fact, perception is possible only as standing under the categories, and so as objectivated, i.e., as the perception of objects of experience. As Kant says at B104, the concepts which give unity to the pure synthesis of intuition rest on the understanding and are the *third* requisite for knowledge of an object, in addition to the given manifold and the synthesis of the manifold by the imagination. This confirms that there are no concepts in the manifold or in synthesis; accordingly, there are no concepts in apprehension, and so, no objects of perception. The only way in which Kant can distinguish between sensation and perception is by identifying the latter with the process of the constitution of objects; and this process is the same as judgment. Thus a judgment of perception is also a judgment of knowledge. But since knowing is the constituting of its objects, how can we err?

Nevertheless, Kant often speaks as though perception is in fact sensation, and that it occurs independently of concepts. The most explicit passage of this sort occurs at B122 (in a text judged by de Vleeschauwer to be "un-Kantian"). "The categories of understanding, on the other hand, do not present us with the conditions under which objects (*Gegenstände*) are given in intuition. Objects may therefore indeed appear without necessarily referring to the functions of the understanding, which need not therefore contain [the objects'] *a priori* conditions." De Vleeschauwer says that by *Gegenstand*, Kant may be referring here "to a not yet unified grouping of perceptions."[3] Rousset, one of the best Kant scholars, sees here the "indeterminate object."[4] But neither of these notions is compatible with an object of perception, and indeed, the expression "indeterminate object" is an oxymoron.

Gerold Prauss addresses the same problem as follows. He treats *Erscheinungen* as letters with which the categories "spell out" or achieve the unification of objects of scientific experience

(*Erfahrung*) as opposed to perception (*Erscheinung*).[5] The "experiences" are accordingly "determinable" or interpretable" as objective (i.e., determinate) *Gegenstände*.[6] This metaphor is in my opinion faithful to Kant's doctrine, to which I have already alluded as a hermeneutic of experience. But the metaphor also makes evident the unsatisfactoriness of that doctrine. Not only are the letters of the alphabet conventional but, in spelling, the letters do not play a functional role in determining the structure of the sense, whereas perceptions do play a functional role in determining the structure of the object.

More important, however, is the following objection. How can intuitions be designated, with Prauss, as "conformable to"[7] a given concept unless they are predisposed to it? Are we to assume that intuitions are conformable to conceptualization in general, but in such a way that any intuition can be subsumed under any concept whatsoever? Can I erroneously produce a rose bush out of the same intuitions or perceptions which, when correctly subsumed, yield a dog? If this is so, then on Prauss's theory, intuitions contribute nothing in particular to concepts of objects, but therefore nothing in particular to "experiential" or objective perception of them. Accordingly, they serve as a quasi-Aristotelian prime matter, capable of becoming anything under the imprint of concepts, which now, contrary to Kant's doctrine, must contribute sensible properties and determinate perceptual form, and not simply "real predicates" of a discursive nature. Conversely, if intuitions are in fact "conformable to" in the sense of "capable of being subsumed under" a correct concept (with the corollary that "objective validity" means "capable of being true"), then these intuitions are potentially the form; Aristotelianism is once more reinstated.

In short: the perceived *Gestalt* of the object of everyday experience *cannot* be the same as the concept or the perception of the object of experience as defined by Kant. There is a difference between perceiving a dog and possessing scientific knowledge about the nature of a dog. But neither can the everyday object of perception be the same as the "indeterminate object" or the assemblage of not yet unified sensations of private subjectivity.

Notes

1 Citations from the *First Critique* refer to the page numbers from the A and B editions, as printed in the *Philosophische Bibliothek, Bd. 27a* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1956). Translations are my own.
2 In *Metaphysics in Ordinary Language* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 1999; Reprint: South Bend, Ind., St. Augustine's Press, 2004), chapter 5.
3 H. J. De Vleeschauwer, *La Déduction Transcendentale dans l'œvre de Kant*, 3 vols. (Antwerp, Paris, and the Hague: De Sikkel, Champion, and Martinus Nijhoff, 1934-7), cited from Volume II, pp. 173, 177.
4 Bernard Rouset, *La Doctrine kantienne de l'objectivité* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1967), p. 305.
5 Gerold Prauss, *Erscheinung bei Kant* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), p. 95.
6 *Ibid.*, pp. 123 ff.
7 *Ibid.*, pp. 123-25, 143, 166.

CHAPTER THREE

Kant on Happiness

Kant addressed himself in all of his major works to the relation between morality and happiness. As is well known, he protests strongly against what is often called eudaimonism, or the doctrine that we are good because it makes us happy. For example, in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant says that the principle of private happiness makes it impossible for us to distinguish between virtue and vice: "it is quite a different thing to make a prosperous man and a good man, or to make one prudent and sharpsighted for his own interests, and to make him virtuous."[1] That is, the pursuit of happiness is one of our personal advantage, not of what is objectively good. Again, in the *Second Critique*, Kant holds that the principle of private happiness is the direct opposite of the principle of morality. The former is concerned with the empirical circumstances that gratify our natural inclinations, and so they vary from person to person and case to case. "The moral law, however, is conceived as objectively necessary, because it must hold [*gelten soll*] for everyone who has reason and will."[2] And the same distinction between happiness as empirically conditioned by nature, and the possibility of morality as established *a priori* and dogmatically because free from natural effects, is made in paragraph 88 of the *Third Critique*.

Goodness is for Kant a matter of duty; to regard happiness as the goal of, or a reward for, moral goodness is to obscure the fact that morality is obligatory upon us regardless of the personal consequences. It should be emphasized that for Kant, duty and happiness are not opposed; one might be made happy by doing one's duty, but the latter supervenes over, and is not done for the sake of, the former (166). Furthermore, although it is false that a virtuous disposition [*Tugendgesinnung*] necessarily produces happiness in the sensible world, it is not impossible that this should occur in the noumenal

world (206–07). The gratification of our natural inclinations is a species of obligation, but it carries no moral value. Nothing exercises Kant's scorn more forcefully than the failure to distinguish between the obligation to duty and the pursuit of pleasure, and in his analysis, it is difficult if not impossible to distinguish between natural happiness and pleasure. We must act morally even if it should be painful; and indeed, in some extreme passages, Kant seems to prefer that it be painful, lest we be tempted into acting for pleasure. As he says in the *Second Critique*, moral man "lives only out of duty, and not because he finds the slightest pleasure [*Geschmack*] in life" (157). In other words, Kant distinguishes, often implicitly, but in the *Metaphysics of Morals* explicitly, between physical and moral happiness. The former is derived from what nature bestows, and is enjoyed like a gift from a stranger; the second lies in "satisfaction with one's Person [=personhood] and in his own moral conduct." Only the second constitutes a legitimate use of the term "happiness." "For he who shall feel happy in the mere consciousness of his righteousness, possesses already that perfection that in the previous section was explained to be duty" (228).

Natural happiness, as dependent upon empirical contingency, is not obtained through pure reason, and obviously not by a grasp of the universal and *a priori* form of the moral law, but rather through prudence or cleverness (*Klugheit*), the ability to calculate the consequences of particular acts for the aforementioned purpose of satisfaction. We are allowed, however, to strive for the worthiness to be happy, which depends upon our obedience to duty for its own sake; as we shall see, we must so strive. Since genuine or morally deserving happiness is available only in a future world (as Kant normally argues), it can have nothing to do with the gratifications of our natural inclinations. Kant does not discuss the precise nature of genuine happiness; one has the impression that it is always out of reach, a goal that somehow motivates our striving, without presenting itself as merited or accessible for any other reason or in any other way than through the possession and exercise of a good will and respect for the law.

Kant says that the ancients tried to identify virtue and happiness, and so succumbed to eudaimonism (201–02). He has in mind

the Epicureans and Stoics rather than Aristotle, who is scarcely mentioned in the *Second Critique*, in passing, in a somewhat later footnote (231). It seems clear that Kant did not have an accurate picture of Aristotle's teaching. Nevertheless, it is helpful to contrast Kant's approach to the question with Aristotle's own argument. Aristotle's treatment of the connection between virtue and happiness is the most detailed and subtle presentation of this topic in the history of philosophy. A comparison between the two thinkers helps us to see the main points in Kant's often obscure presentation of his doctrine of morality and in particular, of his treatment of happiness. In the space of a single essay, I cannot analyze exhaustively the arguments of either of the two thinkers, let alone both of them. The present study is thus intended as a preliminary sketch of a larger investigation. My aims are therefore quite limited. I shall begin with an introductory summary of the major points of difference between Aristotle's and Kant's moral teaching. The special value of this contrast is not merely that the two philosophers seem to be in diametrical opposition on the relation of morality and happiness. Even more important is the fact that both start with an observation based upon common sense or the pre-theoretical reasoning of everyday life. And yet the observations from which they begin are themselves incompatible. This is not to say that both are not justified by an important aspect of ordinary experience. But we learn something fundamental about common sense and ordinary experience when we see that it leads two of the greatest philosophers to views on moral virtue and happiness that are mutually incompatible.

For Aristotle, it is plain that all human beings seek happiness as the highest good.[3] Equally obvious for Kant is the fact that, as all would agree, happiness is only part of the highest good, of which the other part is morality or the worthiness to be happy (*First Critique*, A813/B831). Aristotle proceeds to articulate his common-sense understanding of the highest good into a doctrine of virtue as a mean between two extremes which is calculated by prudence or practical intelligence, and which is itself possessed only by the person of perfect virtue (*EN* VI, 1144a29-b1). It is not clear whether Aristotle holds consistently to his claim in Book I of the *Nicomachean*

Ethics that every normal person can be blessed (*makarion*) through virtue (1099b18 ff.). He more frequently emphasizes the great difficulty of achieving genuine virtue (e.g., *EN* II, 1109a24), and says that the truly virtuous person (the *spoudaios*) judges each case correctly and so serves as a canon and a measure because he possesses practical judgment (*phronesis*), which never errs (III, 1113a29 ff.; VI, 1142b31 ff.). Whereas everyone seeks happiness, and although genuine happiness, according to Aristotle, is virtuous activity, it does not follow that everyone is virtuous or perceives the connection between virtue and happiness. Finally, Aristotle refers to the views on the link between virtue and happiness both of the many and of the few distinguished persons (*endoksoi*); he says somewhat puzzlingly that both sets of views are likely to be largely right (I, 1098b27 ff.). In sum, Aristotle often seems to be making an analysis of common sense in his study of ethical virtue, or of what all sensible people know in general, yet the actual determination and practice of what is virtuous in each case seems equally often to be reserved for the few. This is by no means incompatible in all respects with Kant's own procedure. He too starts with common moral judgment, as for example in section 1 of the *Groundwork*, and he often emphasizes the fact that morality must be easy to understand: Everyone knows and can do his duty (*Second Critique* 64–65). Yet the full justification of the connection between duty or worthiness to be happy, and genuine moral happiness itself, requires a philosophical argument of extraordinary complexity. On the whole, Aristotle does not provide us with a full statement of the link between practice on the one hand, and a theoretical account of the natural context or substructure of practice on the other. One could say that there are three stages in Aristotle's ethical philosophy. The first stage is that of the citizen, who requires no theoretical explanations of any kind but only a good, i.e., properly habituated character (I here omit consideration of the complications introduced by the type of regime under which the individual lives). The second stage is that of the law-giver, educator, or statesman, who needs to know only the simplified theoretical account provided by Aristotle of the nature of the virtues, justice, friendship, and pleasure, and to a still lesser extent,

of theory, as well as of the faculties of the soul as sketched in Book VI. The third stage is that of the philosopher, and here it is entirely unclear how much of a theoretical knowledge of nature is required for a full grounding of ethics. Certainly there is nothing comparable to Kant's philosophical justification of duty, goodness, and the possibility of genuinely deserved happiness. On the contrary, we are told explicitly that our present inquiry is not for the sake of theory, but is designed to make men good (*EN* II, 1103b26; cf. I, 1094b11 ff. and 1095b6).

We should also note that what is for Kant admitted by "everyone" is quite different from the commonsense views of the few (*endoksoi*: those of good repute)—or the many—as identified by Aristotle. Kant starts from the perception of the lawlike character of moral principles and their subsequent rejection of prudence or any reference to the contingencies of personal gratification. Incidentally, there is an ambiguity in Aristotle as to whether we are virtuous for the sake of happiness, or whether virtue simply is happiness. I cite two passages from the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Toward the end of Book One (1101b25 f.), Aristotle says that *eudaimonia* is beyond praise, unlike justice. Much later, in Book Ten, Aristotle says that *eudaimonia* in the primary sense is identical with theoretical contemplation (1177a16–18). The practically virtuous life is *eudaimon* only secondarily (1178a9). For Kant, of course, moral virtue is higher than theoretical contemplation; the latter does not make us worthy of happiness, as does the former.

This will suffice as an introductory over-view of the difference between Kant and Aristotle. Let us now study the details of Kant's account of happiness in the *First Critique* (A800/B828). I have selected this passage because it contains a convenient and reasonably concise statement of the essential elements in Kant's position with respect to the difference between morality and happiness. So far as I can see, nothing that Kant says in this passage is rejected in his later treatments of the topic, nor is anything radically essential added afterwards. But even if I am wrong in this impression, it will be a valuable introductory exercise to study closely the position taken in the *First Critique*, especially because the last part of this

work is seldom studied with the care that is devoted to the earlier sections. The immediate context is the introduction of three topics that concern all human beings: God, freedom, and immortality. The nature of our concern in these cases, or let us say the way in which to reflect upon them, is practical, not theoretical. "Everything is practical that is possible through freedom. But if the conditions for the exercise of our free choice [*willkühr*] are empirical, then in that case reason can have none but a regulative use, and can only serve to produce the unity of empirical laws, as e.g., in the doctrine of prudence [*Klugheit*] the unification of all ends that are given to us by our inclinations [*Neigungen*] into the single end of happiness [*Glückseligkeit*] and the harmony of means for attaining that end constitute the entire business of reason, which can therefore provide none but pragmatic laws of free conduct for reaching the ends recommended to us by the senses, and therefore can provide no pure laws that are determined completely *a priori*" (A800/B828).

The word *Willkühr* suggests the arbitrariness of inclinations that are determined by our senses rather than the freedom characteristic of the will. On this point, see A534/B562: "*Freedom in the practical sense* is the independence of the power of choice from *necessitation* by impulses of sensibility." In other words, the impulses of sensibility, or our natural inclinations, are not free but given; we are "free" to employ prudence or cleverness (*Klugheit*) to obtain the ends we desire. The ends themselves are natural, and so compelled. They have nothing to do with morality. "Happiness" means here the "satisfaction" of all our inclinations (*Befriedigung*: A806/B834). Strictly speaking, this has nothing to do with morality, which is rather associated with the *worthiness to be happy*. We see already that Kant distinguishes between empirical happiness and moral blessedness; we are about to see that the latter is postponed to the next world or is given the shape of a hope for the future rather than a condition of life.

Since morality depends upon free choice, a proposition that Kant accepts without argument as undisputed, it cannot depend upon sensual inclination, which determines choices relative to its satisfaction. But why must moral choice be *a priori*? The implication is that empirical laws will all be infected by the senses, that is, by nature.

In other words, we have to remember the main thesis of Kant's philosophy: the distinction between the phenomenal domain, in which freedom is impossible because it is ruled by physical determinism, and the noumenal domain, in which pure practical reason acts spontaneously and autonomously to give laws to itself. That is, the laws are not imposed upon us from outside ourselves, and so neither by God nor nature. In order to be free, we must be able to choose. If, however, we choose a particular action on the basis of our analysis of the particular circumstances, we fall back into the domain of experience, that is, of the senses and their inclinations, and so of nature. The choice must not be of the individual action so much as of a pure practical law that we give to ourselves, and which itself obligates us to perform the act in question. As we shall see later, the obligatory or regulative role of the law comes from its universality. We are to act in such a way that we could will to live in a society in which everyone would be required to act in the same manner. Let us note that it makes no difference to Kant whether the pure practical laws of reason are "practical" in the empirical sense. He assumes that the individual person can always will correctly, that is, correctly understand the possibility of making universal the requirement to act in such-and-such a manner. The point is not discussed here, but the assumption is that morality, and hence the worthiness to be happy, is equivalent to a good will rather than to a life of good actions. Since good actions take place in the phenomenal world, whereas pure practical laws are invoked or formulated in the noumenal domain, it would seem that Kant is required by his own theory to give precedence to willing over acting. This is of course entirely non-Aristotelian.

The universality of the moral law does away with the danger of selfishness or the identification of one's own inclinations with what ought to be done. It is just making the same point in another way to say that the law must be *a priori*, because for Kant, all universal laws are spontaneous productions of pure reason; that is, they constitute the form of empirical experience rather than an induction from experience itself. Continuing with A800/B828, Kant makes this very point: "Pure practical laws, on the contrary, whose end

is given by reason completely *a priori*, and which do not command under empirical conditions but absolutely, would be products of pure reason. Of this sort, however, are the moral laws; thus these alone belong to the practical use of reason and permit a canon."

I turn now to A804/B832 ff. The immediate context is the formulation of the three questions of interest to both speculative and practical reason. I note in passing that Kant says here *spekulative*, not "theoretical." The distinction is explained at A634/B662 f.: "A theoretical cognition is *speculative* if it pertains to an object or concepts of an object to which one cannot attain in any experience. It is opposed to the *cognition of nature*, which pertains to no objects, or their predicates, except those that can be given in a possible experience." In other words, we can speculate about things that we cannot know. The point here is that we speculate about certain questions that are of decisive importance to human life but we cannot know their answers theoretically. Kant sometimes uses "speculative" as an apparent synonym for "theoretical," as for example at Bxxvi, where he says that speculative cognition is restricted to objects of experience; that is, it is identical with theoretical knowledge of nature (cf. *Third Critique*, 171 f.).

But this point of terminology is not essential to our purposes. What counts for us is Kant's claim that there is evidence in the domain of the practical that allows speculative reason to believe, and on that basis, to hope, that certain answers to the aforementioned questions are true. The first question is: What can I know? This is "purely speculative." That is, it has nothing to do with morality. The second question, on the other hand, is: "What should I do?" This contains an "ought," and therefore invokes free will. It thus lies entirely outside the sphere of cognition or science, and is "purely practical." There is no possible knowledge of objects that may be brought to bear upon the answering of this question. The third question is as follows: "If I do what I should, what may I then hope?" This question, Kant says, is "both practical and theoretical, so that the practical leads like a clue to a reply to the theoretical question and, in its highest form, the speculative question." But this does not of course mean that the practical clue leads us to objects,

the cognition of which provides us with theoretical knowledge of the conditions of hope. The practical clue uncovers a dimension within which our hope is enabled to stand as a surrogate for theoretical knowledge. "For all *hope* concerns happiness, and with respect to the practical and the moral law it is the very same as what knowledge and the natural law is with regard to theoretical cognition of things. The former finally comes down to the inference that something *is* (which determines the ultimate final end) *because something ought to happen*; the latter, that something *is* (which acts as the supreme cause) *because something does happen*."

Allow me to expand this crucial statement. The domain of practice furnishes us with grounds for the assertion that it is the case that my good will makes me worthy of happiness. But I will not actually achieve this happiness except for the fulfillment of certain conditions which may be summarized for the moment as the existence of God and personal immortality. I ought to be justified in my hope for happiness; therefore I believe that God exists and I am immortal. It is essential to grasp that there is no "reason" in the theoretical sense for such an inference. In his fullest statement on this point, at the outset of the *Second Critique*, Kant says that we know the moral law, which in turn requires for its validity that we are free (5 f.). Note that the authority of the moral law is autonomous; i.e., it is not dependent upon a belief in God and immortality. This belief is required in order that the good will may obtain its highest good, namely, the coincidence of worthiness to be happy and actual happiness. But moral law is obligatory in itself, regardless of whether we are or become happy thanks to our obedience to it.

In the next segment of the passage on which I am commenting, Kant introduces the distinction between happiness and the worthiness of happiness, and in so doing, he prepares the way for a distinction between two senses of happiness, which are referred to in the *Metaphysics of Morals* as physical happiness on the one hand and moral happiness on the other. Speaking of the former, Kant says: "Happiness is the satisfaction [*Befriedigung*] of all our inclinations... The practical law from the motive of *happiness* I call pragmatic

(rule of prudence) but that which is such that it has no other motive than *the worthiness to be happy* I call moral (moral law)." The happiness that derives from satisfaction of the inclinations is in one sense determined and in another contingent. It is determined in the sense that we must act in accord with the laws of our empirical nature, but it is contingent in the sense that prudence or cleverness is required in order to calculate correctly what acts will achieve the aforementioned satisfaction. We are as it were "free" only to choose the means to the naturally determined end. But the laws associated with this end are not autonomous or legislated by us; hence we are not free and therefore morality is not involved.

To continue:

> The first [i.e., the practical law] advises us what to do if we want to partake of happiness; the second [i.e., the moral law] commands how we should behave in order even to be worthy of happiness. The first is grounded on empirical principles; for except by means of experience I can know neither which inclinations there are that would be satisfied nor what the natural causes are that could satisfy them. The second abstracts from inclinations and natural means of satisfying them, and considers only the freedom of a rational being in general and the necessary conditions under which alone it is in agreement with the distribution of happiness in accord with principles, and thus it at least *can* rest on mere ideas of pure reasons and be cognized *a priori*. (A806/B834)

Once again I emphasize that, according to Kant, I can know that I am acting morally through obedience to the moral law, and so that I am worthy of happiness. In what is certainly one of the weaker passages in his exposition, he says: "I assume that there are really pure moral laws, which determine completely *a priori* (without regard to empirical motives, i.e., happiness)..." He appeals to "the proofs of the most enlightened moralists" and to "the moral judgment of every human being, if he will distinctly think such a law" (A807/B835). The argument in the *Second Critique* is in my opinion no stronger, since it takes for granted what needs to be proved, namely, that every person has a clear idea of a moral law, and further, that this idea is accurate and reliable. It looks very much as though Kant is

grounding transcendental necessity in empirical contingency. But I am here concerned to make a different point. To be worthy of happiness is not the same as to be happy. Even if we accept Kant's assurance with respect to the existence of pure *a priori* moral laws that are evident to all, and the freedom of choice that is required if we are to acquire the worthiness to be happy, we need some further reason to hope that this worthiness will be rewarded. Differently stated, we need some reason (since we are in the domain of moral or practical *reason*) to make our hope plausible.

In the next section of our passage, Kant turns to the task of establishing this plausibility. Having assumed that there are pure moral laws which command *a priori* and absolutely, he goes on to say: "Pure reason thus contains—not in its speculative use, to be sure, but yet in a certain practical use, namely the moral use—principles of the *possibility of experience*, namely of those actions in conformity with moral precepts which *could* be encountered in the *history* of humankind. For since they command that these actions ought to happen, they must also be able to happen, and there must therefore be possible a special kind of systematic unity, namely the moral," as is not the case, for reasons irrelevant to our present concern, with the speculative principles of reason (that is, the unity of nature) (*ibid.*). Kant's reasoning is as follows. We know that there are moral laws, to which we are absolutely obligated. Therefore we must be free to obey these laws; otherwise they would not be moral but natural or theoretical. But if we are free to obey them, then this obedience is possible. Furthermore, the possibility extends to every human being. But Kant is of course not claiming that universal morality is possible in the empirical, pragmatic, or natural domain. That would in fact be impossible, not merely because most people are selfish or evil, but because even the exercise of a good will depends upon the freedom of the noumenal or transcendental domain. We thus have the following curious consequence. Actions that could be in conformity with moral precepts are to be discovered as situated within human history. But the free choice of such acts, and so our very existence as moral agents, cannot be situated within history. I mention in passing that

when Kant addresses the question of historical progress toward political virtue (an expression I use in the Machiavellian sense), he puts universal peace at an asymptotic distance. This is equivalent to placing it outside of history.

Kant continues: "I call the world as it would be if it were in conformity with all moral laws (as it *can* be in accordance with the *freedom* of rational beings and *should* be in accordance with the necessary laws of *morality*) a *moral world*" (A808/B836). This is not the empirical or phenomenal world. It "is conceived thus far merely as an intelligible world, since abstraction is made therein from all conditions (ends) and even from all hindrances to morality in it (weakness or impurity of human nature)." Kant does not say so, but the implication is that the empirical world can never coincide with the intelligible world; otherwise put, such a coincidence would be tantamount to the destruction of the empirical world as it exists now, and in particular of human nature, that is, sensual desires or inclinations. To refer to the moral world as "intelligible" is thus the same as to say that it exists in our thoughts only, whether these thoughts be called speculations, beliefs, or hopes. The intelligible world is "thus far" (implying that it could become something else) "a mere, yet practical, idea, which really can and should have its influence on the sensible world, in order to make it agree as far as possible with this idea" (*ibid.*).

One way to read this passage is to infer that in the perhaps distant future, yet somewhere within historical existence, human beings may be brought to coincide in their behavior with the idea of the intelligible world of complete and systematic morality. Such a notion may perhaps be found in Kant's essays on history and world politics, but it does not seem to be what he has in mind here. "The idea of a moral world thus has objective reality, not as if it pertained to an object of an intelligible intuition (for we cannot even think of such a thing), but as pertaining to the sensible world, although as an object of pure reason in its practical use and a *corpus mysticum* of the rational beings in it, insofar as their free choice under moral laws has thoroughgoing systematic unity in itself as well as with the freedom of everyone else" (A808/B836).

In other words, even if everyone in this world were to become completely moral, we would all still be bound by the nature of the phenomenal world within which we actually exist; hence freedom, and so goodness or the worthiness to be happy, would remain in the intelligible world as a *corpus mysticum* of rational beings. The split between the sensible and the intelligible world is not one of morality alone, and not even fundamentally, but rather it is one of phenomena and noumena. So long as there are human beings, there will be a dualism of the sensible and the intelligible worlds. But this means that the dream of complete morality is impossible, since it depends upon the disappearance of the body, that is, on the appearance of a *mystical* body as the replacement for its corporeal imitation.

On the other hand, if we believe in God and immortality, then we can assign the power to grant moral happiness to God, and the worthiness of the recipient to its incorporeal nature. Kant now turns to this final step in the argument by providing an answer to the third question: "if I behave so as not to be unworthy of happiness, how may I hope thereby to partake of it?" (A809/B837). The answer to this question, Kant says, depends upon "whether the principles of pure reason that prescribe the law *a priori* also necessarily connect this hope with it." The key word here is "connect." The implicit assumption at this point is that since I am compelled by my knowledge of the moral law to strive to be worthy of happiness, it would be absurd if there were no possibility that my striving should be rewarded. But this possibility does not follow from the moral law itself, since as Kant regularly stresses, we are obligated to it independently of any consideration of reward or personal happiness. The most Kant can show is that the hope for reward is not absurd, or in other words, that it is possible for me to be rewarded. This is why Kant refers to such a possibility as a hope. Morality is binding in its own right, or as this could also be expressed, it is intrinsically good. But it is not by itself the *summum bonum*, which also includes the actual achievement of happiness, and this means, of course, the achievement of blessedness, not of physical or empirical happiness.

Kant, despite his moral severity, does not attempt to persuade us that human life is justified by a good will alone. The good have a right to be happy, if not in this world, then in the next, or in the intelligible kingdom of the *corpus mysticum*. If this right is not fulfilled, then life is unjust, or rather, it is neither just nor unjust but absurd. To see this, we have only to imagine a world in which those who act morally are never rewarded and indeed, are miserable in this world without receiving recompense in the next. Aristotle avoids this possibility by identifying happiness as virtuous activity. This line is unavailable to Kant, since it raises the danger of eudaimonism, namely, that we act virtuously in order to be happy, and not for the sake of virtue itself. It is also not a thesis that can be easily sustained by distinguishing between physical and moral happiness. Aristotle admits that virtue requires luck as well as external equipment, but such an admission would be fatal to Kant's moral doctrine. In short, if morality does not in itself guarantee happiness, then this happiness must be supplied by an external agent, namely, God. For without God, that is, without the reward of worthiness, it is not simply the case that we cannot achieve the *summum bonum*. We are committed to hold that the world is amoral, or in other words that goodness does not make us happy. And even worse, we can be good and miserable at the same time. I said a moment ago that in this case, life would be neither just nor unjust but absurd. But it could be argued that on Kantian grounds, we are required to say that life is in this case unjust, since we understand ourselves to be obligated to justice rather than injustice. If the just are punished with misery and the unjust rewarded with happiness, of however worldly or empirical a kind, then this is surely injustice. But whether we call it absurd or unjust, it is obvious that the *summum bonum* is not merely a welcome bonus to minimal but sufficient goodness. Without the guarantee that goodness will be rewarded with happiness, the goodness of the good becomes ambiguous and therefore questionable. This reward cannot come simply from being good, because moral goodness is an obligation, not a reward. It must therefore come from God. A belief in the existence of God is therefore required in order to exclude the possibility that life is unjust or absurd, or both.

Thus far it is reasonably clear why we might hope that God exists. But why should we believe it? Kant's first assertion in defense of this belief is not very helpful. "I say, accordingly, that just as the moral principles are necessary in accordance with reason in its *practical* use, it is equally necessary to assume in accordance with reason in its *theoretical* use that everyone has cause to hope for happiness in the same measure as he has made himself worthy of it in his conduct, and that the system of morality is therefore inseparably combined with the system of happiness, though only in the idea of pure reason" (A809/B837). The necessity of the moral principles rests upon "the moral judgment of every human being" who thinks clearly moral laws. This ostensible necessity arises from the universal form of a moral law. But that we have cause to hope for happiness if we are worthy of it does not follow from the universal form of moral law. Neither does it follow from the act of being moral, i.e., of willing in accord with such a law. From where, then, does this hope arise? It must be from the desire to acquire the happiness of which we deem ourselves worthy. This desire, although it is not the cause of our being moral, is nevertheless justified. That is to say, it is just, and therefore moral, to hope for what one deserves. But the belief that we will obtain our deserts is something else again. Hope that transforms itself into belief without reason is tautologously unreasonable, and Kant is engaging in moral philosophy, not Christian homiletics. What is not yet clear is why a cause to hope for happiness, that is, a cause that transforms hope into belief, has anything to do with the *theoretical* use of reason.

With this question in mind, let us proceed to the next paragraph of Kant's text. "Now in an intelligible world, i.e., in the moral world, in the concept of which we have abstracted from all hindrances to morality (of the inclinations), such a system of happiness proportionately combined with morality can also be thought as necessary, since freedom, partly moved and partly restricted by moral laws, would itself be the cause of the general happiness, and rational beings, under the guidance of such principles, would themselves be the authors of their own enduring welfare and at the same time that of others" (A809/B837). It is worth emphasizing that in the

empirical or natural world, there are hindrances to morality that cannot be overcome; in other words, the moral kingdom is always, and always will be, an intelligible rather than a natural kingdom. But this is almost trivial compared to the major claim of the passage. If we abstract from the hindrances of actual human life and consider the intelligible world of freedom to will the moral law, and further, if we populate this world with rational beings, namely, those who in fact obey, that is, will, the moral law, then we can say that freedom "would itself be the cause of the general happiness." But this is a *non sequitur*. Or rather, it assumes what is to be proven, namely, that a good will in fact makes us happy. And if it does, is this not to contradict entirely the previously asserted separation between morality and happiness? It is also far from obvious that the rational residents of the intelligible world are identical with the residents, some "rational" (in the sense of moral) and many more not, who populate the natural world. In other words, Kant assumes that since everyone can think a moral law, once the hindrances of the inclinations or nature are removed, everyone will do what he ought to do, namely, will the moral law. Finally, in the intelligible world as described by Kant, freedom awards happiness, not God. Since the intelligible world is the result of human abstraction or rational power, it would seem that God is unnecessary.

Let us see if the immediate sequel clarifies these ambiguities or removes the contradictions just noted. "But this system of self-rewarding morality is only an idea, the realization rests on the condition that *everyone* do as he should, i.e., that all actions of rational beings occur as if they arose from a highest will that comprehends all private choice in or under itself" (A809–10/B837–8). If all men had good wills, happiness for everyone would be the result of universally moral behavior. In other words, each of us would rejoice in the knowledge of our perfect goodness. We would collectively constitute the deity (the "highest will") from which all actions arise. But there remains one little problem. Why should knowledge of our goodness make us happy? Now as a matter of fact, I am prepared to grant this as an empirical observation; human being are so constituted as to be happy about their own goodness. If we abstract from

all hindrances to goodness, we will also abstract from all sources of pain or sadness that might impinge upon this happiness. But I see no reason to infer from a consideration of the pure moral will, as described by Kant, that we are made happy by its activity. Neither do I see any reason to agree that every free will (i.e., every will freed from the hindrances of the natural world) will be a good one. If this were so, then moral good would be necessitated by the freedom of the will alone. But this would contradict its freedom, and thus destroy morality.

To continue: "But since the obligation from the moral law remains valid for each particular use of freedom even if others do not conduct themselves in accord with this law, how their consequences will be related to happiness is determined neither by the nature of the things in the world, nor by the causality of actions themselves and their relation to morality" (A810/B838). That is, the moral law is always binding, regardless of whether it is obeyed by all or not. Otherwise put, although I am free to disobey, I am obligated to obey. Neither the nature of things nor the causality of actions in the phenomenal world determines the relation of things or causes to happiness in the genuine or moral sense. My choice, whether to obey or not to obey, is independent of these empirical circumstances, and so too is the act of obedience or disobedience. This is what it means to be free. Therefore "the necessary connection of the hope of being happy with the unremitting effort to make oneself worthy of happiness that has been adduced cannot be cognized through reason if it is grounded merely in nature, but may be hoped for only if it is at the same time grounded on a *highest reason*, which commands in accordance with moral laws, as at the same time the cause of nature" (*ibid.*).

In this passage, Kant almost but not quite makes the desired shift from hoping to believing. My hope for happiness is unreasonable, and also immoral, if it is based upon the prospects for the gratification of my natural inclinations. I may hope for happiness, however, if there exists a *highest reason*, that is to say, "the highest will," which does not obey but rather commands. There is still no reason to believe in such a highest will, nor has any reason been given to

assume that the source of the moral laws desires our happiness or is prepared to grant it. What I have now, assuming that the highest reason exists, is a reason for hoping, but not yet for believing, that I will be happy. But why should I accept the grounding of the hope of being happy in a highest reason? There seems to be a reason for *not* doing this, namely, that it cancels our autonomy and makes God the ground of moral law. One could reply that "highest reason" refers to something like transcendental moral reason, but this has the consequence that we are divided in half within the moral world, into wills that are free to obey or disobey, and a transcendental will (the same in all) that is free to command. I note that such a line attributes to Kant the practice of esotericism or the use of popular (exoteric) speech to veil his meaning from the orthodox, something that Kant denies doing.

I must quote one more paragraph at length. "I call the idea of such an intelligence [namely, the highest reason] in which the morally most perfect will, combined with the highest blessedness, is the cause of all happiness in the world, insofar as it stands in exact relation with morality (as the worthiness to be happy) *the ideal of the highest good*" (A810/B838). An "idea" is "[a] concept made up of notions, which goes beyond the possibility of experience" (A320/B377). An "ideal" is "the idea not merely *in concreto* but *in individuo*, i.e., as an individual thing which is determinable, or even determined, through the idea alone" (A568/B596). Kant also says in this passage that "what is an ideal to us, was to *Plato* an *idea in the divine understanding*." Suffice it to say that the ideal of the highest good is in the first instance the purely intelligible concept of the unity of perfect morality and blessedness as the cause of all happiness in the world. The last phrase is a bit confusing, since it cannot refer to natural happiness; it would in a way have been better to say "all happiness not in the world" or, perhaps still better, "all happiness in the intelligible world alone." This to one side, the ideal tells us that perfect morality and blessedness together cause happiness. But what is the connection between the two? No reason is given to justify such a connection; instead, the ideal expresses precisely what we hope for. It cannot therefore serve as the ground of belief.

Is this ideal the concept of God? One would surely think so from the expression "cause of all happiness," and Kant is about to introduce God in the continuation of the paragraph. "Thus only in the ideal of the highest *original* good can pure reason find the ground of the practically necessary connection of both elements of the highest derived good, namely of an intelligible, i.e., *moral* world." I interrupt the citation to note that we find this necessary connection only because we put it there. To continue: "Now since we must necessarily represent ourselves through reason as belonging to such a world, although the senses do not present us with anything except a world of appearances, we must assume the moral world to be a consequence of our conduct in the sensible world; and since the latter does not offer such a connection to us, we must assume the former to be a world that is future for us. Thus God and a future life are two presuppositions that are not to be separated from the obligation that pure reason imposes on us in accordance with principles of that very same reason" (A811/B839).

Why must we necessarily represent ourselves as belonging to such a world? Because of the acceptance of the nature of moral laws, and the corollary necessity that we be free if we are to carry out our obligations to those laws. But what guarantees that morality and happiness are connected in this world? Only, I suggest, our conviction that if morality is not rewarded with happiness, then it becomes absurd. In other words, a connection between morality and happiness is assumed from the outset, but this is obscured by the explicit denial that moral action is for the sake of happiness. Kant insists that we act out of duty, but he admits that in so doing, we assume that we have the right to be rewarded with happiness. I must do my duty even if it deprives me of worldly happiness, but I am made happy in another sense by the hope that I will be rewarded with genuine or moral happiness in a future world. The highest possible good is for me, as for every human being, the unity of worthiness to be happy and actual happiness. But the cause of this unity is God, and furthermore, a God whom I assume to be just or morally good, namely, a god who will indeed reward me as I deserve. The belief in God, and so in a future life, is necessary

because I cannot reward myself. One might suppose that I could derive happiness from thinking of myself as a resident in the *corpus mysticum* of the intelligible world, but as we have already seen, this is enough to give meaning to moral choice but not to the reward of happiness, since I continue to exist as a sensible creature in the natural world, and thus to be subject to the hindrances to virtue that my inclinations impose. It is all very well to say that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, my will is free to obey the moral law because I dwell in both the natural and the intelligible world. But my residence in the natural world is enough to deprive me of moral happiness, not only by setting up hindrances to virtue but by actively directing me toward the happiness of fulfilling my natural inclinations. I must, in fine, believe in God if I am to have any hope of happiness, and in immortality, since not even God could make me genuinely or morally happy in the physical world.

What reason, then, do I have to believe rather than to hope? So far as I can see, Kant never answers this question at any point in his argument. The real reason is finally made apparent at A811/B839. "Morality in itself constitutes a system, but happiness does not, except insofar as it is distributed precisely in accordance with morality." By "system," Kant means a rational structure or interconnection of elements based upon one principle (A645/B673). We can deduce what it is to be moral from the principle of obedience to a universally valid and *a priori* law, and therefore, we can also identify those who are worthy of happiness. Otherwise put, morality is entirely autonomous; it is a consequence of the self-regulation of the human will, independent of empirical circumstances or divine rewards. Morality is within our own grasp, and so we can enter into the intelligible world through the exercise of the will, even though we remain residents of the natural or phenomenal world.

The same is not true of happiness. We cannot achieve happiness simply through the exercise of our own will. There is no necessary connection between morality and happiness in this world; physical happiness is a matter of cleverness and corporeal inclinations. But neither is it sufficient to claim that we achieve the moral happiness that we deserve as residents of the intelligible world, simply

through being good. The requisite systematicity of happiness, that is, its distribution in strict co-ordination with the deserts of the recipient, "is possible only in the intelligible world, under a wise author and regent. Reason sees itself as compelled either to assume such a thing, together with life in such a world, which we must regard as a future one, or else to regard the moral laws as empty figments of the brain, since without that presupposition their necessary success, which the same reason connects with them, would have to disappear" (A811/B839). Human beings do not have the power by themselves to achieve the happiness that is the just reward of a good will. We can will to be good, but not to be happy. Kant makes this latter point with respect to nature at some length in paragraph 83 of the *Third Critique*. Since our concept of empirical happiness is tied to the imagination and senses, we formulate it so diversely and change the concept of happiness so often "that nature, even if it were subjected completely to man's choice, still could not possibly adopt a definite and fixed universal law that would [keep] it in harmony with that wavering concept and so with the purpose that each person chooses to set himself."[4] In other words, Kant rejects the Aristotelian notion of an activity that provides happiness by our very nature.

We can restate this last conclusion as follows. In order for moral goodness to overcome the deficiencies of nature and to provide us with happiness, we require a ground that is systematic in the sense that the correct consequences always follow from the operation of the first principle. This ground or principle must be entirely superior to nature and thus able to overcome every natural hindrance to genuine happiness. Only God possesses this power. But furthermore, it is clear after a moment's thought that this divine power can be exercised only in another, future world, namely, the genuine intelligible world of immortal and so disembodied souls. In order for God to reward us with moral happiness, he would have to destroy the natural world, by changing it into the intelligible world, or what is traditionally called "heaven."

This is why, unless God exists and we are immortal, we would have "to regard the moral laws as empty figments of the brain." But this must be made much more explicit than even Kant makes it.

Not only is it the case that a God is required in order to guarantee the proper distribution of happiness, but the God must himself be a moral agent. We must not forget that morality is autonomous; in other words, it depends upon ourselves, not on God. The morality of God lies in his *justice;* that is to say, in his desire to reward the worthy. How does Kant know that God is just? He may hope this to be true, but why does he believe it (if indeed he does believe it)? Certainly this belief cannot be based upon any thesis of steady progress in history, for that would be to naturalize both morality and happiness. The answer that Kant gives in the passage under analysis is that, if we were not rewarded with happiness, the *necessary success* that reason connects with the moral laws would have to disappear. But this can only mean that reason connects the necessary achievement of happiness with the possession of a good will. Either we are justified in expecting happiness as the reward for our goodness, or morality is a figment of the imagination. And in this case, of course, life is reduced to absurdity.

"Hence everyone also regards the moral laws as *commands*, which, however, they could not be if they did not connect appropriate consequences with their rule *a priori*, and thus carry with them *promises* and *threats*. This, however, they could not do if they did not lie in a necessary being, as the highest good, which alone can make possible such a purposive unity" (A811–12/B839–40). It thus turns out that the core of the purposive unity is not morality but happiness. Absent the just reward of happiness, morality becomes a figment of the imagination. We thus pay a very high price for the autonomy of morality. By separating morality from the desire for happiness, Kant believed himself to be safeguarding the former from eudaimonism, or corruption through the selfishness that is an inevitable consequence of the natural, i.e., sensuous, inclinations. But he could not and did not separate morality from the desire for a justified or merited happiness. Having taken the satisfaction of this desire out of human hands, as well as the power of nature, he had no choice but to entrust it to God. By the same token, he was unable to find a more satisfactory basis for belief than hope.

Once we work our way through Kant's endless hypotheses, counterfactual conditionals, and obscure and often inconsistently employed terminology, the suspicion may occur to us that his self-styled preservation of the possibility of freedom, morality, and happiness is no more substantial, and indeed, no more rational, than traditional Biblical religion. The latter requires us to believe in a just God, exactly as does Kant, but with radically less intellectual baggage. Kant claims to have shown the aforementioned possibility by distinguishing a realm of freedom from the determinist domain of nature. But if nature is incorrectly or inadequately described by his generalization of Newtonian mechanics, then the distinction seems to be unnecessary. Moreover, even if it were necessary in order to preserve freedom, it is open to the charge of unintelligibility. How can acts that are determined as we perform them express our free choice with respect to our ostensible residency in an intelligible world that Kant himself calls a *corpus mysticum*? To say that we dwell in two mutually exclusive worlds simultaneously is to offer us what looks suspiciously like a miracle. And of course, Kant does not say that we do in fact dwell in these two worlds, simultaneously or otherwise, but only that we might. Some (myself included) would say that we cannot. But let us assert only the minimum that follows from Kant's own claim: We might not. The justification (in moral terms) for assuming that we do is to rescue a conception of morality that is itself highly questionable, namely, the conception of morality as obedience to universal laws. And as if this were not bad enough, Kant deprives us of access to happiness through natural or supernatural means. Happiness depends not upon our actions but the justice and mercy of a God who is the *summum bonum*. Perhaps it would be more reasonable, and certainly less tedious, to accept this God in advance, and to explain his agency in this world as one of divine intervention. Kant, like so many other rationalists (a term I use here in an extended sense), wished to do away with miracles in this world, but he was unable to preserve the significance of human life except through a miracle, namely, the hypothesis of the intelligible world or the state of grace. I conclude that the desire to preserve freedom and morality was enacted in such a way as to accelerate the

advent of anti-rationalism, or of spontaneity severed from law, and so the destruction of morality.

Appendix

I want to add a point from the *Second Critique* that supplements what we have already learned. In the *First Critique*, the emphasis is upon the noumenal domain as a possible world of freedom. In the *Second Critique*, this is modified in such a way as to meet part of the difficulty of simultaneous human residence in two distinct worlds. In the section "On the Typic of the Pure Practical Judgment" (121), Kant says:

> The subsumption of an act that is possible for me within the sense-world under a *pure practical law* has nothing to do with the possibility of the action as something given in the sense-world; for this belongs to the judgment of the theoretical use of reason in accord with the law of causality, which is a pure concept of the understanding, for which reason has a schema in the sensible intuition. The physical causality or the condition under which it takes place, belongs under the natural concept, the schema of which is projected [or "sketched"] by transcendental imagination. Here, however, there is no question of a schema of something that falls under laws, but of the schema (if this word is here appropriate) of a law itself; because the determination of the will (not of the action with reference to its effect), binds through the law alone, without any other ground of determination, the concept of causality to altogether different conditions than those which constitute the natural connection.

In other words, obedience to the moral law has no consequences within the world of nature (= the domain of phenomena). "The rule of judgment under laws of pure practical reason is this: Ask yourself if the action you propose, if it were to occur in accord with a law of nature, of which you yourself were a part, could you regard it as possible by your own will?" This makes it clear that morality is not a question of an action within the natural world but rather of the willingness to assume responsibility for such an act, were it to occur. And this responsibility would of course be universal, i.e., binding for anyone willing to take on the same responsibility, because that

is the nature of a law. But a willingness to take responsibility for an act is not the same as actually causing that act. In order to establish this, Kant would have to show that the free will has a causal power within the determinist world of nature, and this, as I argued previously, is a contradiction. In this passage, he instead holds to the weaker case that the good will exhibits itself by stating what it would do if it could and were required to take a stand. The result is that the will does not know how it could be causally efficacious, or whether it ever is, even in those cases when it affirms an action that takes place thanks in part to its own deeds. The net result is to weaken radically the moral significance of actions themselves, with a correlative strengthening of the importance of a good will.

Notes

1 *Fundamental principles of the metaphysics of ethics*, tr. T. K. Abbott (London: Longmans, Green, 1934), p. 61.
2 *Metaphysik der Sitten*, ed. Karl Vorländer (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1966), pp. 61–64. Citations in parentheses refer to this edition.
3 *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter cited as *EN*) I, 1095a17 ff.
4 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, tr. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1987), pp. 317 f.

CHAPTER FOUR

Is There a Transition from Consciousness to Self-Consciousness?

I

In this paper, I undertake a very specific task: to cast light on the sense of the transition from the first to the second section of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The first section, corresponding to the first three chapters, is called "Consciousness" and the second section, corresponding to Chapter IV, is called "Self-Consciousness." As the reader will see, I answer the question contained in the title of this paper in an appropriately Hegelian way: yes and no. More specifically, then, the complete answer to this question would be the development of the conceptual relation between the yes and the no. But such a development lies altogether beyond the scope of the present essay. One way to justify the need for such an essay is to note that, at least in English books on Hegel published during the past fifteen or so years, we are told that consciousness is transformed into self-consciousness by means of the struggle for recognition as dramatized in the dialectic of the master and slave. I would not deny that there is some textual evidence for this view. But the preponderant mode of formulation in Chapter IV is to speak of the struggle for recognition as taking place between two self-conscious individuals. Self-consciousness is a precondition for this struggle, a fact of existence, and not a consequence. A few quotations will suffice to establish the point. To begin with, Hegel says that the satisfaction of desire provides self-certitude to self-consciousness, thereby indicating that only self-consciousness is capable of "satisfaction" (139).[1] "Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness" (*ibid.*). One might suppose this to mean that the individual becomes self-conscious in and through the process of satisfying its desire. However, when

Hegel says that self-consciousness is in and for itself "only as recognized," he means that only a self-conscious individual can enter into the struggle for recognition (141). In the following pages, Hegel speaks regularly of the encounter of two self-conscious individuals: e.g., "self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness"; "This excitation of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has in this way been represented *as the action of one*" (142). That is, the process of encounter is a "doubling" or externalizing of self-consciousness; as Hegel says, "The center is self-consciousness, which decomposes into the extremes" (*ibid.*). It is true that the concept of self-consciousness is "completed" by the process to be described in Chapter IV (139). But the concept can be completed only because it is already present. It is not produced by the master-slave dialectic.

One can give at least three reasons why the interpretation, presumably stemming from Alexandre Kojève, that self-consciousness originates in the struggle for recognition, is erroneous. First, it is a logical circle to say that one "recognizes" oneself for the first time in another; such recognition obviously requires antecedent self-cognition. I am aware that circles may play a fruitful role in Hegel's logic, but as we shall see, the fertility of this circle depends upon a suppression or radical reinterpretation of "for the first time." Second, the dialectic of master and slave takes place at two distinguishable (although not radically distinct) levels, the ontological (absolute) and the phenomenological (= human). Even if we grant that recognition occurs at the human level in the struggle over the object of desire, this does not explain the co-ordinate process at the level of the Absolute. Third, it is easy to see that the master-slave dialectic is an instance of the dialectic of the inverted world, which is introduced in Chapter III, and so within the section on consciousness. Why then is self-consciousness not already present within the first section of the *Phenomenology*? What factor or set of factors produces self-consciousness in the specification of the inverted-world dialectic in Chapter IV? As we have already seen, self-consciousness is in fact already present as an essential ingredient of the master-slave dialectic. Our task is to inquire why self-consciousness emerges here

for the first time in the text (exclusive of preface and introduction, of course).

Chapters I-III contain the analytical description of consciousness, or of the non-reflexive awareness of the objective world. Hegel does not emphasize the role of desire within consciousness, because he tends to conceive of desire as awareness by the I-who-desire of itself, as well as of the desired object. This is related to the fact that objects in the public world are usually desired by more than one individual. Nevertheless, desire is at least implicit in the attempt of consciousness to grasp the objective world directly in itself (Ch. I), as empirically analyzable things (Ch. II), or via formal-legal explanation (Ch. III). It is obvious from the non-reflexive nature of conceptualization that the section on consciousness cannot be historical. We enter into history only when we enter the domain of desire or life (134 f.). Prior to this, Hegel is not discussing identifiable stages in the historical development of the human spirit. History is intersubjective: "Self-consciousness is in and for itself, in and through the fact that it is in and for itself for another; that is, it is such only as recognized" (141). This passage may also be used in support of the thesis that self-consciousness originates in the struggle for recognition. But for reasons which have just been given, I take it somewhat differently. It is true that to be conscious of oneself is to be conscious of another. We see, i.e., reflectively grasp, our own desire as ours, by contrasting it with the desire of another. I become aware of the phenomenon of my desire, and so of myself as the desiring creature, when the object I desire is also claimed by someone outside my consciousness. Nevertheless, it is the structure of my own consciousness which permits me to recognize myself, via my desire, in the other. What Hegel calls in the same passage the "doubling within unity" of self-consciousness, is not just a question of the encounter of two individuals. It is a "doubling" within consciousness itself that permits such an encounter.

History is, to repeat, intersubjective, whereas the transitions within consciousness are at most intrasubjective. I say "at most" because it is far from clear whether one ought to speak of subjectivity at all at this stage. It might be better to say that Hegel shows the

impossibility of subjectivity so transparent as not to be definable in terms of its own activity. For example, Hegel may be criticizing the classical doctrines of *aisthesis* and *noēsis* as pure passive receptivity of the "intended" object. Hegel means by "consciousness" the attempt to know the object without knowing the attempt. As he puts it, this attempt to know the object as something *in itself* shows it as *for another* (133). One could object to this suggestion that, in each figure of Spirit, Hegel begins from the immediacy of self-certitude (25). However, immediate self-certitude is not the same as subjectivity; the "self" here does not carry the same conceptual weight as it does in "self-consciousness." In self-certitude, the emphasis is on certitude; there is no need to reflect upon myself as the agent of cognition, and indeed, there is no obstacle to cognition from which the active force might be inflected back upon itself. In subjectivity, we find the structure of an identity within difference of subject and object, and so of a mediation. The immediate has no independent existence in heaven or upon earth.[2] It can be distinguished analytically as a moment in each stage of the development of Spirit (or the concept), but as a moment which is sublated into a dialectical structure together with a co-ordinate mediation. The immediacy of the self-certitude of consciousness does not correspond to an existential or historical stage. Expressed existentially, self-certitude is equivalent to an absence of any need to be concerned with oneself, and hence, as an absence of desire for oneself as a special kind of object. As simply conscious, I would not conceive of myself as a subject. But consequently, I could not conceive of things in the world as objects, namely, as given for or posed by me.

This is what Hegel means when he says that consciousness attempts to know the object (i.e., thing) *in itself* (133: "but this *in itself* gives itself as a mode that can be only for another"). The attempt must fail, and the failure is described in Chapters I-III. Since truth is conceptual, truth about the self depends upon a self-grasping or reflexivity that is absent in immediate self-certitude. However, the absence of truth about the subject leads to a dissolution of the concept of the truth of objects (133: "Let us call the movement of

knowledge, concepts..." "If we give the name of *Concept* to the movement of knowing..." and ff.). The concept is both subjective and objective; there can be no knowledge independent of a knower, and no security with respect to the knower in the absence of knowledge. In sum: consciousness is separate from the truth. It does not know that objects of experience are modes of consciousness ("since the *in-itself* is consciousness"); i.e., it does not know that the concept is both subject and object, because it does not know (or is not reflexively aware of) itself.

To return for a moment to the Greek doctrine of *noēsis*, we can connect Hegel's criticism of pure passive receptivity to the absence of history (except in an illustrative capacity) from the first section of the *Phenomenology*. The Greeks, as Hegel interprets them, lacked a genuine, Judeo-Christian concept of history because they had no genuine concept of subjectivity. At a still more concrete level, this deficiency is connected to the depreciation by Greek thinkers of physical labor, or the satisfaction of desire by modification of the external world. History is the story of human work, but work is already an expression of consciousness of the subject-object relation, i.e., of *self*-consciousness. To this extent at least, the master-slave dialectic is a sharply-focused exemplification of the decay of the classical Greek world (as is especially visible in the section on Stoic and Skeptic). However, none of this explains, either logically or historically, the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. It is rather a consequence of that transition.

In Chapter IV (self-consciousness), we begin with the "conceptual" (as opposed to the historical) result of Chapters I-III (consciousness). Consciousness is now aware of itself as the truth of the object (133: "for certitude is itself its object, and consciousness is itself the true"). I will offer only the briefest summary of the argument by which Hegel establishes this result. It is impossible to conceive of the object as independent of the process of conception. Perhaps the crucial case in Chapter III is that of scientific laws or conceptualizations of natural forces. The law is the "essence" or "interior" of the forces or external phenomena. But this is to say that the truth of natural phenomena resides within the conceiving or law-giving Spirit.

I will not dwell upon the pertinence of this text to contemporary debates in the philosophy of science. Instead, I note that Hegel develops a deep consequence of the ambiguous relation between force and understanding, or natural phenomena and scientific laws. The object of understanding possesses two dimensions: the exterior or sensuous, and the interior or supersensuous. In Chapter II, Hegel in effect studied force as exterior (= the perceived thing). In Chapter III, he concentrates upon interior force (form or law). The transition (for us, the enlightened reader) from II to III is the failure of consciousness to make sense out of the unstable object of perception, and the consequent construction by consciousness (which it regards rather as a discovery) of the distinction between interior and exterior. In other words, consciousness develops a doctrine of Platonic forms or Newtonian laws, hence of supersensuous unities, in order to bring sense and stability to phenomena or to sensuous multiplicities. (One should add to this that Platonic forms and Newtonian laws are examples of explanations of phenomena in which consciousness dominates over self-consciousness. Obviously, consciousness taken "independently" could not formulate any theories for the simple reason that it has no independent existence.) The mathematicizing of genesis is thus an extension of Platonism in which forms are demoted from heaven into the interior of the phenomenal world, but which forms, as laws, continue to constitute a supersensuous *Jenseits*.

The result of the mathematicizing of the sensuous phenomena is thus a suppression, rather than a "saving" of them. However, forms, laws, or equations are actualized in the sensuous world of phenomena; the supersensuous is essentially sensuous. This is a crucial illustration of what Hegel calls *the inverted world*. The inversion process is not just a mark of our failure to develop a dialectico-speculative logic adequate to the task of conceptualizing genesis. The development of such a logic *grasps* the process (or is equivalent to the grasping of the process by itself) but does not extinguish it. In somewhat different terms, actuality is inflected but not dissolved by a variety of dualisms: coming-to-be and passing away, unity and multiplicity, essence and appearance, form and content, and so on.

We may express these dualisms as the necessary consequence of the self-manifestation of spirit in (and as) the world. Somewhat more abstractly: dualism is intrinsic to the exteriorization of interiority, and hence to the subject-object structure that defines the world as given by self-consciousness to itself. Indeed, self-consciousness *is* the giving by consciousness of the world to itself. And self-knowledge is the conceptual grasp of the identity-within-difference of individual self-consciousness and absolute Spirit. To know the truth is to know that one knows it: hence the dualism between individual and Absolute (or man and God) is not extinguished; for if it were, either the individual or the Absolute would disappear. The Absolute actualizes as the individual; the essence of the individual is the Absolute.

This process of the inverted world underlies all of Hegel's logic, and so it is omnipresent in the *Phenomenology*. Hegel introduces it explicitly in Chapter III, on "Force and Understanding," because formalism or legalism represents the highest effort of consciousness (i.e., as dominant within the spirit) to grasp the objective world without subjectivity. It is quite natural for the human spirit to strive for objective truth, i.e., to attempt to know things as they show themselves, independently of the perspective from which we see them. In our desire to avoid perspectivism or subjectivism (e.g., "psychologism"), we try to separate the content of knowledge from the process or activity of knowing. This attempt leads to formalization or to the mathematicizing of phenomena, and hence to a suppression of the knower but also of the object of knowledge or things as they show themselves. The suppression of the subject entails the suppression of the object. However, Hegel does not leave it at that; he does not simply argue that the givenness of things *as* they give themselves entails an audience or recipient of that gift. He also shows how the cognitive dimension is an implicit ingredient in the ostensibly purely objective structure of the object of scientific understanding. If I may use a post-Hegelian terminology, the sense of an equation is distinct from its referent, not simply with respect to semantical role, but ontologically. Sense is a function of intelligence: of consciousness. And consciousness of this function

is self-consciousness. But this is still not the whole story. Whereas conceiving is ingredient in the concept, Hegel does not infer a vulgar relativism, psychologism, or historicism. The perspectival nature of cognitive vision is overcome by our seeing the entire show, by not restricting ourselves to a single scene or act.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to explore the ambiguous relation between the *Phenomenology* and the *Science of Logic*.[3] But it has to be noted that the *Phenomenology*, although it provides us with all the acts, is not yet the entire play. We still require the conceptual articulation of the structure of the dualisms surveyed in the *Phenomenology*. Odd though it may initially sound, one could therefore say that there is no doctrine of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology*, but that this doctrine is contained in the *Logic*. The *Logic* actualizes in the *Phenomenology*; the essence of the *Phenomenology* is the *Logic*. As it stands, this is of course too cryptic, and will even strike the specialist as an erroneous formulation. Presumably the actualization of the *Logic* is the *Realphilosophie*. Nevertheless, I believe that there is an important truth in my formulation. Whatever may be the case for God, the *Logic* is intelligible to mortals only after having gone through the stages in the *Phenomenology*. But the stages through which they go are only reflexively intelligible, in the sense of justifying Hegel's overall teaching, from the perspective of the *Logic*. And this is because the categories of the *Logic* are the skeleton of the phenomenological development of Spirit. The *Realphilosophie* may then be regarded as the *Aufhebung* of the first two stages. For our present purposes, the main point is this: it is possible that there is no explanation, derivable from the *Phenomenology* alone, of the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness.

At the beginning of this section, I claimed that the master-slave dialectic is a specification of the inverted world. I have now further claimed that the inverted world is a fundamental aspect of the activity of the Absolute. We should not forget Hegel's assertion that, in the rational state, the master-slave dialectic is suppressed.[4] Even if this is true, of course, the inversion process may take other forms. However, consider the following not always sufficiently noticed problem. Self-consciousness, in the by now more or less standard

account, originates in the struggle for recognition which takes the form of the master-slave dialectic, or the struggle for the satisfaction of desire. If desire is satisfied, e.g., if the desire for recognition is fulfilled institutionally or legally within the rational state, *what becomes of self-consciousness*? Reason, in the structure of the *Phenomenology*, does not "replace" self-consciousness; as is obvious, one cannot be rational without being self-conscious. One cannot be an actualization of the Absolute except as an individual. But one cannot be an individual except as defined within intersubjective experience by conflicts arising from converging desires. I cannot develop the problem of the rational state in this paper. We must be content to discern the shadow this problem casts across the features of the status of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology*.

To return to the inverted world, Hegel generalizes the various dualisms noted above, as follows. Every attempt to express the unity of a manifold as distinct from its manifoldness must fail, because expression is multiplication; alternatively, to analyze is to divide. The conceptualizing impetus of consciousness attempts to express the unity of a manifold as its ground, source, principle, or law. Consciousness rejects multiplicity as unsatisfactory or unintelligible. But if unity is the principle of multiplicity, then the actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) of unity is multiplicity. And conversely, multiplicity is then actually (= rationally) unity. The unity of consciousness thus inverts immediately into unconsciousness. In historical terms, the immediate self-certitude of the Cartesian *ego cogitans* leads to a suppression of the ego in favor of the mathematical object or the ratios of *mathesis universalis*. But the suppression of the ego itself results in the inversion of unity to multiplicity. In the absence of perspectival unifications, the manifold dissolves. Post-Hegelian relativism is a consequence of the failure to conceptualize the *dialectical* relation between unity and multiplicity, thanks to the rejection of a dialectico-speculative logic. To take the crucial example, it is impossible to insist upon the "objective" validity of scientific laws or descriptions without paying any attention to the subjective activity of describing or law-giving. Conversely, to emphasize this subjective activity, but with no access to a conceptual account of the structure, and so

of the completeness, of activity, is to surrender to subjectivism and historical relativism. Quasi-mathematical models of human activity are merely instances of the problem, since there is no mathematical representation of the subjective activity of mathematicizing.

On this basis of the foregoing survey, we can make the following suggestion. Self-consciousness is a "spiritual" model of the identity-within-difference of unity and multiplicity. This is not to suggest that the model has been grasped fully by Spirit at this stage of its development. We might expand the metaphor by saying that the model is not sufficiently rich to provide an interpretation of spiritual work in its comprehensive (and circular) extent. Nevertheless, self-consciousness makes visible the fundamental problem to be resolved by dialectico-speculative logic, as consciousness does not. The logic of consciousness is, so to speak, linear or non-dialectical, at least in the following sense. There is a dualism intrinsic to consciousness from the outset, a prototype of the subject-object distinction; but this prototype is concealed by the immediate self-certitude for which consciousness, and hence the givenness of phenomena, is not a problem. The attempt to analyze the prototypical object without consideration of the prototypical subject, or the subjective dimension of analysis, fails. The result is a dualist cycle of materialism and idealism. Consciousness does not know that it is the truth of the object, because it does not know itself. But a subjectless object lacks formal or teleological unity; in the absence of subjective intention, there are no objective articulations of phenomena. The direct consequence of the collapse of "objectivism" is, however, extreme subjectivism: we pass from materialism to idealism. If there are no objects-in-themselves, then things are merely what they seem. And since the absence of objects includes the subject, that is, since the objectification of the prototypical subject fails together with the collapse of external objective articulation, there is a spiritual *implosion*. Exteriority is inverted into interiority.

So long as interiority remains empty of spiritual structure, idealism deteriorates into subjective relativism, which is repugnant to materialists but irrefutable by them. The recognition by consciousness, at the close of the first section of the *Phenomenology*, that it,

consciousness, is the truth of the object, thus points backward as well as forward. According to Hegel, the recognition in question is present "for us...not yet for consciousness." He means by this that "we" see here the presence of self-consciousness "for itself, not yet as unity with consciousness over-all" (128). In order to qualify as self-consciousness in the genuine sense, there must be consciousness of another or object, and thereby, reflection into itself (*ibid.*). So the peak of consciousness, as it were, is to emerge as an imperfect version of self-consciousness, namely, as "for itself," hence, as recognizing that it is the truth of its object, but not that it and its object *exist* in the identity-within-difference of the subject-object relation. Looking backward, we are faced with a choice between an idealistic interpretation of material objects (as exhibited in the passage just quoted) or a collapse back into a materialist interpretation of the intellect or spirit. There is, however, no basis for a decision between these alternatives. For if intellect is not matter and matter is not intellect, then the only remaining possibility is the separation of intellect from matter, and this is unthinkable or unintelligible (for we cannot think what is separate from our capacity of thinking). The dualism of Section One, to make this point somewhat differently, arrives at a union of intellect and object, not through a developed doctrine of either, but through the collapse of both. Therefore it is not possible to style the union as idealism *or* materialism. Looking forward, the internal collapse of the three possibilities just canvassed, forces us to recognize that consciousness both is and is not its objects. Previously, it was impossible to choose between materialism and idealism. Now, we see that both are wrong, and this is an advance beyond each, but one which preserves the content of both.

Note that we are not equivocating upon the senses of "is," but rather employing them. The analytical distinction of the senses of the copula is itself intelligible only if there is a comprehensive "concept" of the copula in which all of the senses are embedded. Consciousness "is" its objects in the sense that the essence of both is absolute activity. On the other hand, absolute activity has an interior and an exterior dimension, corresponding here to consciousness and its objects. One might object to Hegel that the dualism of

consciousness and object is simply raised one level to the Absolute. Hegel's reply is, as usual, that the dualism is overcome in the conceptual articulation of the relation between these two dimensions of the Absolute. In my opinion, this reply, however buttressed by dialectico-speculative logic, fails, and fails necessarily, to make conceptually transparent the relation between consciousness and formal structure. But this does not alter the fact that, in self-consciousness, we have a model of this relation. If the subject is the meaning of the object, and the concept is the meaning of the subject, then the concept combines from the outset the interiority and exteriority of Spirit. But this means that there can be no conceptual explanation of that combination which does not presuppose it. In the linear sense of mathematical logic, there is no non-circular explanation of the identity-within-difference of consciousness and its objects. Therefore there is no non-circular explanation of the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness.

Hegel, to be sure, contends that genuine logical explanation is indeed circular. He means by this that an explanation of some finite aspect of experience leads inevitably to an explanation of the whole of experience. And this in turn means that a complete explanation runs through all categorial levels of a finite determination, thereby returning us to that finite starting-point, only now exhibited, not simply as a part within a whole, but as a part that (through the movement of the concept) is continuously turning into the whole. The completeness of the explanation is then confirmed not merely by our returning to the starting-point, but by the ostensible impossibility of adding a categorial level to the explanation, a level not already given by Hegel. I am not interested in defending this thesis of Hegel; on the contrary, I regard the thesis as obviously indefensible, since at any given historical epoch, we should have to suspend judgment to see whether history confirms the Hegelian teaching forever. A single new category is enough to refute Hegel, whereas nothing can confirm his doctrine but the end of history itself. And this is why the question of the end of history is absolutely crucial to understanding Hegel. The circularity of the concept at a given epoch is not a proof of the end of history.[5] However, my point here

is a different one. It makes no sense to say that the development of the concept demands the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness, if there is no possible conceptual account of this transition. And, I repeat, there cannot be, since conceptual explanation, as genuinely dialectico-speculative, must itself include, or presuppose, the very transition requiring to be explained. Consciousness cannot transform itself into self-consciousness by giving to itself the concept of the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. If it could do this, it would already be self-conscious.

There is a sense in which Hegel grants the point I have just made. The section on consciousness, as I noted above, is not "historical" or does not describe concrete historical individuals at a certain level of development. Despite historical resonances (the Greek *noēsis*, the Cartesian *cogitans*, and so on), this section is more accurately characterized as demonstrating the impossibility of an existential correlative to consciousness (hence the collapse of Greek philosophy, Cartesian dualism, etc., as dominated by the paradigm of consciousness). To the extent that we can conceive of an existing individual who is conscious but not self-conscious, it is as a kind of schizophrenic who continuously falls into two distinct *personae* just as he succeeds in integrating them, now under the one, now under the other. Thus Hegel never claims that there is a historical or existential transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. We must infer from this that to be a human being is to be self-conscious from the outset, in however primitive a manner. Certain difficulties arise here with respect to infants, but they are not decisive. More interesting is the apparent conflict between the simultaneous beginning of self-consciousness and history, and the claim that self-consciousness originates in the struggle for recognition exemplified by the master-slave dialectic.

Another way in which to state the problem is to note that, strictly speaking, there is no concept of consciousness. The first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* demonstrate in detail that each attempt to grasp consciousness must fail. In my earlier metaphor, it is not until self-consciousness that we are provided with a model of the identity-within-difference of subject and object. In self-consciousness,

the subject is its own object. There is a general analogy between the first section of the *Phenomenology* and Book One of the *Logic*, in which the analysis of the continuum prior to the emergence of essence and reflection terminates in dissolution. In the *Logic*, quantity and quality take the roles played by proto-object and proto-subject in the *Phenomenology*. But this means that the problem is the same in the *Logic* as in the *Phenomenology*. Reflection emerges from the *nihil* of dissolution or conceptual incoherence to provide the first coherent if not fully developed model of the basic Hegelian relation of identity-within-difference. Granted, to return to the *Phenomenology*, the incoherence of consciousness, how explain the logical (as opposed to the existential) transition from consciousness to self-consciousness? A thorough response to this question would entail examination of Hegel's doctrine of negation, and especially of double negation, a task that is out of the question within the limits of this essay.[6] For our purposes, however, the following remark will suffice.

Hegel's doctrine of negation owes its peculiarities to two components. The first is represented by Spinoza's assertion that every determination is a negation.[7] In Hegelian language, "the negative is also positive," that is, it contains the negated content (*Logik*, I, pp. 35 f.). In determinate negation, symbolized as non-*p*, there is no question of a *nihil absolutum*. Instead, the negation neutralizes or "brackets" a determinate content, takes it out of play but does not destroy it. Instead, it preserves this content for future appearance or *positioning* under a richer, or at least modified, form. The second component is Hegel's concern with life, activity, or development, rather than with the static abstractions of mathematical logic or formal syntax. Double negation is thus equivalent to, or concomitant with, reflection, the pivotal example of which is the transition in the *Logic* from Being to Essence. Stated with maximum concision, the spatio-temporal continuum, or the immediate presentation of Becoming as a dialectic of quantity and quality, cannot be conceived as a unity (more accurately, as a coherent identity-within-difference). This failure of conception is expressed in the same way as the breakdown, noted above, of the debate between materialism and idealism. The ostensibly purely objective presentation of the world as a continuum

of measurable quantities and qualities, or of "measures or "ratios" (*a la* Descartes) cannot be sustained in the absence of a subject. The "objective" world is thus revealed to be "appearance" or "illusion" (*Schein*). However, illusion is the exterior of an interior truth, actuality, or essence. Recognition of the illusory character of pure objectivity, or rather, of pre-subjective proto-objectivity, is at once a *reflection inward*. In the *Logic*, this inward reflection is conceived initially as a dualism between appearance and essence. The analysis of essence leads us to the realization that "appearance" is actually the self-presentation of essence. The first negation of the world (as exterior continuum) is thus itself negated, or *reshown* (i.e., reconceived) as the self-presentation of essence. There is no dualism of essence and appearance, but rather an essence that appears.

The second negation no more cancels the first than did the first annihilate its content. Instead, it resolves antecedent dualisms at a higher (or deeper) level of complexity. In the *Phenomenology*, the failure of consciousness to sustain itself conceptually leads, not to unconsciousness, but to self-consciousness. The negation of the world intrinsic in the conceptual failure of consciousness is itself negated, i.e., transformed into the historical domain of subjectivity in the genuine sense of self-consciousness. There is, however, this difference between the logical reflection from illusion to essence, and the phenomenological reflection from consciousness to self-consciousness. The growing-together of *Schein* and *Wesen* requires a conceptual elaboration, whereas the consciousness is necessarily self-conscious at the very outset of the transition. In other words, in the *Phenomenology*, self-consciousness is a precondition of the initial encounter of individuals, hence of mutual self-recognition, and so all historical growth.

The situation is then as follows. We are faced with two questions. First: why is there a transition at the logical level, via double negation, from consciousness to self-consciousness? Second: since there is a process of conceptual development intrinsic to the logical transition, but no exactly analogous development in the phenomenological transition, how does the first explain the second? For our purposes, it is the second question that counts. Even if there

were a thoroughly satisfactory answer to the first question, it would not resolve the difficulty to which we have addressed ourselves. Of course, the answer to the difficulty might be as pedestrian as this: it is impossible to conceive of the human being except as self-conscious, and we learn this from the first section of the *Phenomenology*. In this case, what is the function of the struggle for recognition or the master-slave dialectic? If Hegel's answer is so pedestrian, why does he obfuscate it in the thoroughly non-transparent structure of the *Phenomenology*, and indeed, virtually contradict it in the opening sections of Chapter IV? Why doesn't the *Phenomenology* begin with self-consciousness, and go on to show the conceptual failure of doctrines of naive self-certitude, which are surely, from Hegel's standpoint, interpretations of subjectivity? If historical or existential man (altogether, not just European) begins as self-conscious, then the portrait of immediate self-certitude antecedent to the struggle for recognition is not merely ahistorical, but it is conceptually inaccurate.

II

Perhaps one could say that, at the beginning of Chapter IV, Hegel presents in historical terms the moment of immediate self-certitude, before it is compromised by the encounter with another. In this vein, the elaborate micro-analyses of the loss of self-certitude in the first three chapters are now suppressed in favor of the direct phenomenological event. There may be something in this suggestion, but I find it far from convincing as it stands. I will allude to just one aspect of our analysis thus far. The failure of rationalist objectivity described in Chapter III is clearly a historical episode or conflation of historical episodes, which make no sense except as a *consequence* of the dialectic unfolded in Chapter IV. I tried to justify this historical material by saying that the scientific or formalist rationalist is dominated by, although he cannot be simply an exemplification of, consciousness. But this is an *ad hoc* hypothesis, and is not supported by a direct and natural reading of the text. The problem is precisely that there does not seem to be a direct and natural reading of the text; hence the various attempts to dissect the *Phenomenology*

into historical strata, i.e., into different stages of composition. This procedure is again highly dubious, since it requires us to suppose that Hegel did not notice the unfinished character of his masterpiece, even when he was in the process of revising his work for republication. In sum: if the first section of the *Phenomenology* is ahistorical, why is it dominated by obviously historical examples? But if it is historical, to what existential type does consciousness without self-consciousness correspond?

Let us take our bearings again for a renewed assault on the problem of self-consciousness. Whether the "genuine" beginning of the *Phenomenology* is with consciousness or self-consciousness, for Hegel, man begins in certitude. The given is initially unquestioned in the specific sense that I take it as mine, without doubting my right or capacity to do so.[8] I think that one may defend this contention as follows, by considering our experience in order to make sense of the text. It is possible to reflect upon consciousness, or to analyze its properties, and to note the phenomenon of givenness itself. This phenomenon is so transparent that it is normally ignored by everyone except phenomenologists. There is an aspect of consciousness in which the world is indubitably pointed out to me, not as my world, and not even as the world presenting itself to me, but as the presence of the world. Only retrospectively do I identify this presence as in some sense "mine" or the objective content of my subjectivity. The presence to which I refer is given to us "before" we set ourselves to the task of phenomenological analysis. It is the "pre-given" horizon within which each of us is constantly focusing his attention, on both the content as given and oneself as recipient or viewer. I said "before" to suggest that temporal sequence is not quite the correct process. We are continuously, as conscious beings, slipping in and out of the focus of self-consciousness. Nevertheless, one can say that consciousness comes "first" in this sense: tasks are carried out, goals set, and problems noticed, within the unfocussed horizon of world-presentation. And this unfocussed horizon is *indubitable*, for to doubt it is to reflect upon it as having already been given. Furthermore, as we come to a focus with respect to the horizon of the given, it remains, as the horizon, just beyond the

grasp of our focusing. To grasp the horizon is impossible except by conceptualizing it, and so transforming its mode of presentation.

Initially and intrinsically the givenness of the world is existential, even without focusing upon the "I" who exists as the recipient of, and participant in, this world; once it is conceptualized, the nature of the given is trans-formed. It is no longer immediate but conceptually mediated.

Differently stated, there is no genuinely adequate concept of immediacy. Hegel grants this: yet he purports to capture immediacy conceptually by mediating it; that is to say, by both preserving it as it is and raising it up to a broader context or higher level of development. But there is no broader context than the immediacy of the horizon. It is from within this unfocussed horizon that we focus upon the *concept* of horizontality. So even if the preceding paragraph contains a genuinely Hegelian interpretation of the moment of consciousness (and the Husserlian nature of the point makes this doubtful), a difficulty remains. Previously we noted the discontinuity between consciousness and the concept of consciousness. Here we observe that consciousness as immediate certitude cannot be conceptualized, since concepts *mediate* experience. This holds good for both self-certitude and certitude about givenness. Indeed, it would be impossible to distinguish between the two without transforming consciousness into self-consciousness. And so we return to our initial dilemma. If Chapters I-III succeed in their conceptual (and ahistorical) task, they show us the impossibility of conceptualizing consciousness as distinct or abstracted from self-consciousness. And this corresponds to the existential or historical impossibility for the individual to subsist as consciousness without self-consciousness. It seems that neither logic nor history justifies the structure of the *Phenomenology*. The *Phenomenology* seems to encourage us to follow Kojève in taking the struggle for recognition delineated in Chapter IV as the actual beginning of Hegel's account of human spirit. But this leaves unanswered the question why Hegel began with Chapter I. Was it to provide us with a dialectical demonstration of the soundness of what we may call the Kojèvian interpretation? This seems far-fetched.

Nevertheless, as I have already noted, there is some textual foundation for this interpretation. We have seen that in the first three chapters, self-certitude is lost within external or objective truth. In this form, certitude is objectified; "certitude is itself its object, and consciousness is itself the true" (133). Immediacy is thus sublated into the mediation of consciousness with itself. The self does not negate consciousness, but preserves it at a higher level. That is, the immediacy of consciousness becomes accessible, whether conceptually or only existentially, within the mediation of self-consciousness. The first section of the *Phenomenology* becomes intelligible only after we have made the transition to Chapter IV. The failure to sustain the truth of the proto-object or thing in itself leads to the recognition that I am (or posit) the truth of the object. In quasi-Cartesian language (appropriate here because Hegel, like all the Idealists, is reinterpreting Descartes): I may be deceived about the objectivity of the sense of the object. But I cannot be deceived in this case about the subjectivity of that sense (cannot, in other words, when once I discover the original deception). Consequently, my "deception" is actually my certainty, namely, of myself. Truth coincides with the truth of self-certitude. We are no longer in the domain of the transparent self-certitude of the *ego cogitans*, but in that of genuine subjectivity or self-consciousness.

All this, however, is excessively abstract. Let us put the point as follows. The moment of desire is at once subjective and objective. Desire is for an external object, or something I lack (such as an internal modification: e.g., happiness, prestige, love). But desire can never be anonymous. It is always internal, always my desire. This is true even if I desire something for someone else. Life is desire (cf. 135: the unity of self-consciousness with itself is "desire," "*desire* in general"; the object unifies with self-consciousness through reflection and "becomes life through this reflection into itself"). As living or desirous, I am self-conscious; I cannot "lose myself" in desire until I know who I am. The initial presence of desire is immediate and unquestioned; there can be no doubt that I desire what I desire. On the other hand, the initial presence of desire is mediate and questioning if not questioned. It is *I* who desire *x*; hence *x* is

mediated in its absence by my desire. Desire is here a proto-concept, within which I grasp a given object. Differently stated, desire mediates me and the *x* desired. In previous terminology, the horizon of desire is immediate and unfocussed. But in attending or responding to my desire, I focus or mediate it. The independent individual objects of consciousness have been interiorized as moments *of* consciousness.[9] This identity-within-difference of "appearance" (= objects) and "truth" (= subjectivity) is "*desire* in general" (135). It must become essential for the individual. The process by which it does so is, speaking concretely, history. It is the dialectic of the struggle for recognition, and so, of master and slave.

Our suggestion about the relation of the first to the second sections of the *Phenomenology* may now be expressed as follows. It is obvious from the pre- or ahistorical nature of Section One taken in general, that there is no actual, existential, or historical transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. In addition, I have argued that there can be no genuine conceptualization of consciousness in itself: hence the necessity of presenting historical examples in Section One, even to formulate the non-conceptual nature of consciousness. The dialectical function of the first three chapters is then indeed negative or self-contradictory. But this is also positive or intentional; negativity is for Hegel work, the work of transformation and development, and this is a positive activity. The positive result, again, is this: at the level of consciousness, *there is no self*, whether subjective or objective. The historical portraits given a dialectical role in these chapters, and especially in Chapter III, are designed to refute scientific rationalism, or the claim that consciousness can free itself from self-consciousness while remaining existentially and conceptually integral. I am not entirely convinced that Hegel is right to proceed in this manner. No doubt he believed that such a refutation, placed at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*, would free us of prejudices that might hamper our grasp of the subject-object structure of Chapter IV. But one could also argue that the refutation becomes intelligible only after having worked through the *Phenomenology* several times. Furthermore, the universality of desire might be held to present an irrefutable basis for establishing the subject-object structure as the

precondition for scientific rationalism. However this may be, the existential or historical content of Chapter IV can be understood as formally parallel to the development of the argument in Chapters I-III. The attempt to proceed upon the basis of immediacy is necessarily a mediation of immediacy. Section One demonstrates before our very eyes the non-conceptualizability of consciousness. To conceive it coherently is to reveal it as self-consciousness. Section Two makes the same point in terms of activity or, as would perhaps now be said, of praxis.

In the first four chapters of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel thus shows us, both theoretically and practically, that man is initially "outward-directed." Man tends to take himself initially for granted, because of the initial stability of the external world. It is therefore wrong to speak of the immediate instability of the world; the given or horizon is stable and only this allows us to judge that such-and-such a condition is unstable. Nevertheless, the stability of the horizon is misleading and transitory with respect to any individual stage; for Hegel, to anticipate, stability is always a circular process, *Bewegtheit* ("agitation") rather than rest. An effort is required on our part to preserve initial stability. This effort forces us to reflect upon the "outside" and hence to arrive at a recognition of the "inside-toutside" distinction. This in turn leads to the discovery that the "outside" is a projection of the "inside." As a result, we find ourselves in an unstable situation, because the "inside" is not yet grounded in a comprehensive conceptual grasp of itself. Let us note that the attempt to avoid subjectivism by rejecting the "inside-outside" distinction, or interiority, as a cognitive principle, leads to a relativism of "outsides" or exteriors. Suppose we argue that, despite the testimony of introspection or feeling, it makes no conceptual sense to speak of inner experience. According to this argument, it is a category-mistake to use spatial language with respect to consciousness. And, in the familiar version, reference to subjectivity as the interior of the spatio-temporal world establishes a mind-body dualism from the outset, which requires either the nonsensical doctrine of a transcendental ego or the outright admission that there are as many versions of reality as there are subjects trapped within their bodies.

The obvious fact about arguments like these is that they tell us to ignore our direct experience of interiority as inaccessible to conceptual clarification. Furthermore, they take "interiority" in the most naive sense possible, by analogy with an individual contained in a room. This analogy is defective because the individual within the room is already marked by interiority; otherwise, he could not be looking out into the room, or out through the windows in the room to the world beyond. Equally if not more important, these arguments assume that whatever cannot be grasped conceptually is irrational. And concepts are modeled after mathematics rather than the everyday process of thinking that actually characterizes our reflections upon the phenomena of consciousness.

In Hegelian language, a rejection of the "interior-exterior" distinction, even if motivated by distrust of spatial metaphors applied to spiritual activity, leads to alienation and reification of the spirit. In other words: if there is no inside, then there can be no outside. What then is the status of the world, if it is neither idea nor matter, neither subject nor object? To speak of man as being-in-the-world, whether in the accents of ordinary language analysis or existential ontology, is merely to attribute two dimensions to the world which are indistinguishable from the attribution of interiority and exteriority. In ordinary language analysis, the distinction tends to be masked by various applications of the Fregean "sense-reference" distinction. Referents are the approximate equivalents to *res* or ontic beings in existential ontology: the objects pointed out by the sense of a concept as falling under that concept. But the semantical role of a sense can be fulfilled only with respect to an intellect or conscious agent. The activity of making sense is epistemologically and ontologically distinct from the senses employed by that activity. At this point, semantics and phenomenology coincide to establish the subject-object distinction. The two dimensions of interiority and exteriority are again seen to be unavoidable. Without it, the intellect is sublated within its senses, which in turn are taken either as eternal forms or products of history and convention. In the first case, self-consciousness is reified or formalized, in complete contradiction to our direct experience, simply to satisfy a rigid and incoherent dogma about

the nature of rational explanation. In the second case, history is transformed into the transcendental or absolute ego, with the added disadvantage that it is continually redefining or contradicting itself, in a way that Hegel might style an example of the bad infinity. In sum: a denial of the "inside-outside" distinction leads to precisely the same collapse that marks the end of the first section of the *Phenomenology*. We cannot decide whether the one-dimensional world of consciousness is idealist or materialist, subjective or objective, since none of these terms can apply. If consciousness is to achieve self-consciousness, then we require the distinction between interior and exterior which is not merely the basis of human experience, but which is directly furnished to us by the so-called analysis of concepts intended to abolish it. There is no refutation of the Cartesian beginning-point (using this expression in a rather wide sense), because that beginning is not an argument but a simple acknowledgement of human experience.

We can make the significance of the "inside-outside" distinction more precise by contrasting Hegel's procedure with a non-materialistic attempt to avoid dualism, and specifically, the subject-object distinction. Materialism is an incoherent doctrine because it functions by attributing thought, and hence self-consciousness, to matter. It is of no interest whether there is a physiological co-ordinate to every state of consciousness. The fact that interests us is the conceptual distinction between the state of consciousness and the physiological co-ordinate, a distinction also provided directly by experience. Hegel would not deny that consciousness is mediated by the body: the "immediacy" of consciousness is indeed a mediation of immediacy (inner experience) and mediation (exterior experience). The task of philosophy is to articulate the concept of the structure of immediacy in this sense: to return from the initial immediacy of self-certitude, through the dialectical steps recorded in the *Phenomenology*, to the logical account of mediated immediacy, or the identity-within-difference of self-certitude and the truth of the object. Hegel's refutation of materialism can be reconstructed more or less straightforwardly from his analysis of consciousness. I shall consider instead a teaching that claims to make an advance

upon the Hegelian analysis. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger develops an account of man (as I shall abbreviate *Dasein*) as a being-in-the-world. The sense of "in" is not spatial; on the contrary, one may say that man "secretes" the world as a web of relations, or that man is "in" the world via intentional activity, in a sense ostensibly more fundamental than the distinction between theory and practice. Heidegger's existential reinterpretation of the Husserlian doctrine of intentionality results in an *Aufhebung* of subject and object into the domain of *Sinn*: of sense, meaning, or significance. Whereas much of *Being and Time* is devoted to a phenomenological description of human existence, the result is in its way as abstract or one-dimensional as anything by Husserl.

The reason, I think, is this. In order to overcome the subject-object distinction, or to prepare the way for the uncovering of Being, i.e., in Husserlian language, to eliminate psychologism, Heidegger tacitly adopts a Hegelian doctrine of externalization. Human being is existence, and the *ekstasis* of existence is temporal. Temporality is the primordial sense of care (*Sorge*), the "surface" manifestation of human existence. Man has "location" in a world of purposiveness, thanks to the interwovenness of past, present, and future. These tenses constitute the process of temporalization, or what Heidegger calls "the original out-of-itself (*Ausser-sich*) in and for itself."[10] The Hegelian flavor of this terminology is unmistakable. Hegel's externalization of the Absolute is now Heidegger's externalization of temporality. The being of man, i.e., of his speeches and deeds, thoughts and actions, is constituted by this externalization-process, which "projects" him into a world that is his very own project (whether authentic or inauthentic). In Heidegger, however, the extra-temporal Absolute is present only as *covered over* by its temporal exterior. But this covering over or concealing is intrinsic to the process by which man makes (or discovers) sense out of (or in) his activity. To make sense is to interpret, and to interpret is to take something as something. Only a revelation or epiphany could give us access to Being, not as this or that, and hence presumably not (in the Aristotelian sense) as Being, but to Being—shall we say

"in and for itself"? *Being and Time* first develops the structure of existence as temporal exteriority, thereby transforming spiritual interiority into the activity of the secretion or externalization of *Sinn*. It then attempts to analyze the process of sense-constitution in terms of the structure of temporalization. Just as the first stage of the analysis cuts us off from subjective interiority, so the second stage cuts off access to eternity, and so, to objectivity. Forms, structures, categories, laws, essences, are all temporalizations; hence so too must be the existentials of being-in-the-world. Heidegger's existential ontology is in fact a temporalized semantics.

I want now to characterize the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* in a way that reflects its relation to *Being and Time*. In the section on consciousness, Hegel articulates the primordial strata of the human spirit, the strata enabling man to constitute himself as a self-conscious resident of, and agent within, history. This section does not describe a pre-historical stage of human existence. The act by which man "constitutes" himself as self-conscious is indistinguishable, existentially, from self-consciousness. But we can characterize that act, playing upon a Heideggerian phrase, as a *projection unto history*. There is no equivalent to this section of the *Phenomenology* in *Being and Time*. The effective beginning of Heidegger's analysis is with man as already projected into the world, and hence, into history. This is because, for Heidegger, there can be no conceptual account of the pre-existential. Heidegger's attempt to uncover the deep structure of human existence takes him, as we noted above, into the unstable interior of temporality, i.e., into an interior that is actually an exterior. The ostensibly concrete procedure of Heidegger, which starts from everyday existence, turns out to be altogether more abstract than the dialectical procedure of Hegel. There is a very simple reason for this.

The conception of man as radical temporality is abstract, not concrete, because radical temporality is pure exteriority. It allows no access whatsoever to the most striking dimension of the very phenomena Heidegger purports to save: interiority or subjectivity. Of course, Heidegger does not claim to retain the concept of subjectivity; but what else is his existential ontology if not a

"saving of the phenomena" of human life? The ontology of human existence is intended to provide us with the sense of human being in a deeper, truer, and more comprehensive sense than the subject-object language of German Idealism. But it is not intended to exclude our direct experience of interiority as cognitively irrelevant. The exact opposite is the case. Heidegger purports to overcome the split between the interior and the exterior, or to abolish dualism. But he does not claim to have abolished human existence. The explanation of human existence is Heidegger's way of reinterpreting subjectivity, as I would put the point. It is his way of showing the cognitive centrality of the intentional nature of subjectivity or self-consciousness. Unfortunately, the reinterpretation attempts to avoid the bifurcation of the world into the subject-object distinction. As a result, we cannot decide whether Heidegger is reifying the subject or subjectivizing the object. The web of intentions that constitutes the world is obviously a structure of senses constructed by the human spirit, called by the exteriorizing or alienating term, *Dasein*. If we attempt to look into the interior of this structure, we do not find subjectivity but temporalization, i.e., pure exteriorization.

We should not forget that Hegel does not explain interiority as temporalization or temporality. On the contrary, he explains temporality as the exteriorization of interiority, namely, of the Absolute as interior, or of subjectivity. As we make the transition from revealed religion to absolute knowing, the *Bewegung* ("movement") of Spirit, its temporal excitation, is transformed into *Tun* or *Handlung* ("deed" or "action": 548 ff., esp. 552 ff.), which is an identity-within-difference of eternity and temporality. Time is for Hegel the development or unfolding of the concept. Spirit, as developing, is thus in time until it completes itself, thereby, incidentally, conceptualizing intuition (*das Anschauen*). "Time thereafter appears as the fate and the necessity of Spirit, which is not complete in itself" (558).

For Hegel, then, man is able to constitute himself as a projection-unto-history because his activity is *already* spiritual, already structured internally in the paradigmatic subject-object relation of self-consciousness. The transition from consciousness to self-consciousness is not historical. It is the act of focusing the horizon

of givenness, hence of mediating the immediacy of the given by the positing or constructive components intrinsic to focusing. It is therefore both a taking-in of the exterior, and an exteriorizing of the interior. Hegel has often been criticised for proceeding in a circular manner, or for assuming what he needs to prove: namely, the spirituality of man. But this criticism is the expression of a misunderstanding. Hegel is not proving anything; his logic is not mathematico-deductive. When I use the word "argument" in conjunction with Hegel, I am taking a certain liberty with the sense of the expression, at least as it is normally used in English-speaking philosophy. Hegel "argues" by showing us how the given develops, and thus how each stage of this development *cannot* be used as a coherent basis for a deductive argument, since it is itself changing into its opposite as a necessary aspect of its transformation into totality. I do not want to say that there are no arguments of the usual sort in Hegel. But these arguments are subordinate to the flow of his description of the unfolding of Spirit. Those who chatter endlessly about the lack of clarity in Hegel, have themselves been blinded by the given, or by taking finite stages of development as basic to the process of development. They have tried to explain evolution, history, or process by a static logic. The inadequacy of this procedure is obvious from its own results. One has only to read contemporary analytical philosophy, and especially philosophy of science, to see how the clarity of stability is imposed onto the dialectics of transition: the result is total confusion.

I said above that Hegel is describing the unfolding of Spirit. This description is not a proof, but it is an *interpretation*. On this point, I believe, I part company with orthodox Hegel scholars (who are themselves "interpreters" of the text). Hegel is obviously interpreting human experience because not all competent readers agree with him. Furthermore, for a reason which I have already given, we shall never (short of the day of judgment) be in a position to decide whether Hegel's account is a scientific description and not a speculative interpretation. However, I mention this point in passing, as it is not directly relevant to our investigation. Let me return to the comparison with Heidegger. In the late Heidegger, the attempt to

grasp man and the world via radical finitude and temporality is abandoned. The most obvious reason for this is the impossibility of reaching Being (or Hegel's Absolute) via the analysis of pure exteriority. If Being is the temporalization-process, then it has already been described in Book One of Hegel's *Logic*; that is, it has been shown to be indescribable within a discursively coherent concept. Co-ordinately, the first section of the *Phenomenology* has shown that, apart from the structure of interiority and exteriority, *man has no being*. Heidegger's initial failure does not, of course, lead him to embrace Hegel. In my opinion, he remains a Nietzschean in the decisive sense that his new way of thinking is an experiencing of Being (or its absence), not a conceptual doctrine of its formal structure. Still, it is not altogether wrong to say that the late Heidegger returns to the Hegelian Absolute as the "giver" of the world, while denying that the Absolute can be grasped conceptually. Alienation can then be overcome by a divine revelation only. There is, so to speak, a place in the late Heidegger for Chapter VII of the *Phenomenology*, but not for Chapter VIII.

III

We are now in a position to defend Hegel's structural decision to begin the *Phenomenology* with the analysis of consciousness. Strictly speaking, it is impossible to conceive of man except as self-conscious. But the conception of self-consciousness includes the analytical understanding of consciousness. To understand self-consciousness is to understand it as the reflexivity of consciousness. This in turn requires the analysis of the process by which consciousness engages in reflection. In a discursive presentation, we begin as if consciousness were conceivable antecedently to reflection, and show how various ways of formulating this conception all collapse. But we also show that this collapse is not a cancellation. On the contrary, it is the activity of reflection itself. Hegel thus provides us with a logical dramatization of man as projection-unto-history. It is thus Hegel who explains what Heidegger excludes as inaccessible: the preconditions of *Geworfenheit* ("thrownness"), facticity, and being-in-the world. Hegel does not presuppose what he ought to prove:

he shows the activity or self-presentation of his starting-point, which thus ceases to be (if it ever was) a presupposition. Neither therefore does he assume access to what is factically inaccessible. Instead, he gives a deeper and more illuminating analysis of facticity than does Heidegger. Heidegger describes the exterior of facticity. Hegel describes its interior, and he is therefore able to describe its exterior more adequately.

I have referred above to self-consciousness as the paradigmatic subject-object relation. It follows that, just as we cannot successfully conceptualize consciousness apart from self-consciousness, neither can we analyze the relation of reflexivity by which the subject becomes its own object. We can of course describe this process by one metaphor or another. I myself employed the metaphor of a horizon of pre-givenness within which we focus upon ourselves. But there can be no logical deduction of the transcendental or absolute ego, whether in a Fichtean or Fregean sense of "logical deduction." The Hegelian concept, to repeat, presupposes the identity-within-difference of subject and object. The subject cannot recognize itself unless it is antecedently conscious of itself. In other words, the master-slave dialectic cannot explain the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness because *there is no such transition.* We perceive and conceive things in the world, or the world as a totality, as given to the perceiving and conceiving agent. Of course, we may "lose" or forget ourselves when we are absorbed by an object, but this is irrelevant to Hegel's point. The point is not that I think explicitly of myself as the subject of each object of which I think. It is rather how an object is presented to thinking. I can forget myself only because I am already present.

Whether our paradigm of thinking is speech or vision, the reflexivity of consciousness is intrinsic to the perceptual model. Nothing is accomplished by suppressing the subject-object terminology. Perception, at least in its human form, is inseparable from cognitive activity; and cognition is the activity of cognizing agents. So the Kantian version of the Cartesian *cogito* is the presupposition of Hegel's *Phenomenology.* It is not simply the case that I cannot be deceived about the fact that it is I who am deceived. Only an

"I" is capable of being deceived: this is the deeper point. Arguments from computers are entirely irrelevant, since machines embody the structure of the consciousness of their makers. It is therefore also irrelevant to wonder whether computers are conscious. Each calculation, whether sound or unsound, is a calculation of an individual computer (to which names or identifying numbers are normally assigned, or could be). There is no such thing as an anonymous computation. This is obvious when something goes wrong, and we have to check the computer. If the computer is conscious, it is self-conscious. If this strikes us as absurd, then the computer is a mere tool, an extension of its maker, hence of a self-conscious agent. One can also say that there is no disembodied computation or thought, since the externalized world is the embodiment, and hence the individuation, of the Absolute.

Hegel, of course, is not simply a Kantian. The reflexivity of consciousness is not just a logical necessity, but an existential structure. If there are no thoughts without thinkers, then the thought of the thing-in-itself is already constituted by absolute subjectivity. As Hegel puts it, in the process of self-consciousness, the object "through this reflection in itself has become life" (135). The world is, so to speak, givable or presentable to thought, not as radically external to consciousness, but as constituted by it. Just as there is no thought without a thinker, so there is no content of thought external to thinking. There is, to be sure, externality, i.e., extension and its modifications. But the thinkability of extension is the starting-point for Hegel's interpretation of the Absolute as both interiority and exteriority. In other words, the Absolute is itself constituted as the subject-object relation. This is not the place to defend Hegel's doctrine of the Absolute beyond the minimal remarks necessary to illuminate our specific problem. These remarks are all versions of a single contention. It is a fact that we think the world and its contents, or that there is an identity between intellect and object, despite the difference between them. It is self-contradictory to deny any intimate connection between the two dimensions, but also to reduce one to the other. The only possible explanation is that intellect and its object are *both* same and other, hence intrinsically connected; and so,

connected in a way that exhibits the subject-object structure. What I call here a "connection" is nothing other than self-consciousness. In sum: I can think the world because my thought is an instantiation of absolute self-consciousness. The Absolute actualizes as individuals. One might then refer to a "transition" from consciousness to self-consciousness in the sense of the actualization-process of the Absolute. But this process does not take place in history or time: it *is* the unfolding of temporality and so of history. Time does not unfold like products of a construction kit. There is no time except for a self-conscious individual.

Notes

1 When not otherwise indicated, numbers in parentheses give pages in *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952).

2 *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1951), Bd. I, p. 52. Hereafter *Logik*.

3 For some discussion of this, as well as for another presentation of the inverted world, cf. my *G. W. F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1974).

4 *Enzyklopäde* (1830) ed. Nicolin-Pöggeler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969) Paragraph 433, p. 352.

5 Instead of attempting to give a complete documentation of the role of circularity in Hegel, which would require a book-length study in itself, I restrict myself to the following remark about the end of the *Science of Logic*. According to Hegel, the negative-dialectical activity or development of immediacy returns us to immediacy. However, the achieved immediacy is now mediated. The universal (e.g., the universal premise serving as the major premise of a comprehensive syllogism) is now absolute Spirit *qua* the absolute Idea: it contains the fully developed content. This achieved immediacy (the self-presentation of the whole) is not subject to further negation (or development). There is no further externalization or *Anderssein* because we have arrived at the *Aufhebung* of negation. We have arrived at *truth*, namely, the whole truth or absolute reality (*Logik*, Bd. II, pp. 498–499). The whole contains everything. It contains all determinations or negations, and, as containing them all, or giving to each its place, it negates them all (as separate or unplaced) and so is universality (in the sense that a universal contains all its instances), identity; but a mediated immediacy. This mediated immediacy is moving or "excited" because the whole exhibits the parts or shows each in its place rather than simply containing each like a static universal. And each part, which depends for its intelligibility upon its place, hence upon the activity which places it, or upon the whole, is continuously turning into the whole. This means: if the wise man thinks the whole, he must do so one step at a time. But he is able to proceed because each step turns into its opposite, and so into the next higher step, always sublating the lower step, until no more oppositions are thinkable: the wise man has arrived at the whole. In expressing the whole, he cannot say everything or all aspects of it without repeating himself or restating all the parts. His assertion of the whole is in itself a stating of a single step, the step which sublates all the parts. But the attempt to grasp that last step leads to the re-grasping or restating of all the other steps. Hence dialectic is circular: the system of the *Logik* is totality (II, pp. 500–503). In going backward to ground the beginning, we are also going forward to develop the consequences of the beginning.

6 For further discussion see my *Hegel* book cited in note 3.

7 *Epistolae*, no. 50 in *Opera*, ed. Van Vloten-Land (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1914), Vol. 3, p. 173.

8 See again *Phenomenology*, p. 25: "Sein Recht grundet sich auf seine absolute Selbstandigkeit, die es in jeder Gestalt seines Wissens zu besitzen weiss, denn in jeder, sei sie von der Wissenschaft anerkannt oder nicht, und der Inhalt sei, weicher er wolle, ist es die absolute Form, d.h. es ist *unmittelbare Gewissheit* seiner selbst."

9 "Das *Sein* der Meinung, die *Einzelheit* und die ihr entgegengesetzte *Allgemeinheit* der Wahrnehmung, sowie das *leere Innere* des Verstandes sind nicht mehr als Wesen, sondern als Momente des Selbstbewusstseins, d.h. als Abstraktionen oder Unterschiede, welche *für* das Bewusstsein selbst zugleich nichtig oder keine Unterschiede und rein erschwindende Wesen sind" (134).

10 *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag; 14th edition, 1977), p. 329.

CHAPTER FIVE

Review of Alexandre Kojève, Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne, *Tome 1:* Les Présocratiques *(Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1968)*

I cannot begin this review without a personal comment. Alexander Kojève, who was my teacher and friend, collapsed and died in Brussels on June 3, 1968, shortly after having addressed the delegates to GATT, in the French contingent of which he was an important member. For twenty years, Kojève enacted the synthesis of theory and practice characteristic of the Hegelian sage. As teacher, civil servant, and adviser to statesmen, Kojève exercised an influence on his generation far in excess of his academic reputation. This reputation, outside of Paris, was based almost entirely on his famous series of Hegel interpretations, delivered during the 1930s at the École des Hautes Etudes, and subsequently edited for publication by one of his auditors, Raymond Queneau (who is also the publisher of the volume under review). Among those who followed Kojève's lectures were Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Lacan, Raymond Aron, Father Gaston Fessard, Georges Bataille, André Breton, and the man who later brought him into the French government, Robert Marjolin. One can say with no fear of exaggeration that Kojève's interpretation of Hegel is among the two or three most important of our century, and in my opinion among that of others, perhaps the best single work ever written on Hegel. I cannot discuss the book on Hegel in this review, but must remark that it is still shamefully unknown in the English-speaking world, where German philosophy in general, unless it emerged from Austria or (in some cases) 20th century

phenomenology, is too frequently dealt with at the level of professorial journalism.

Kojève, who was born in Russia (his original name was Kojevnikoff), was essentially influenced by the fact of the Revolution, which he personally experienced, and which, as he once remarked, made him realize the presence of the spirit of world history. As a result of this encounter, he abandoned his studies in art history, and emigrated to Germany, in order to study philosophy. The second decisive influence in his life was Heidegger (cf. p. 166, note 3 of the volume under review). Kojève may thus be said to have initiated, although at a level infinitely higher than his successors, the fashion of combining Marx and Heidegger in the study of Hegel and the concrete post-Hegelian global crisis. In fact, his Hegel book is far more useful as a commentary on *Sein und Zeit* than any of the professorial treatises written explicitly for that purpose. Kojève transformed the Heideggerian existential analytic, with its emphasis on death, finitude, and the rejection of the eternal or extra-temporal, into a Marxist-Hegelian interpretation of the history of the human spirit. Instead of attempting to uncover Being by an analysis of the historical individual, Kojève explained the historical individual by an interpretation of history. Instead of reducing Being to temporal process as emergent from an invisible and unspeakable source, as did the later Heidegger, Kojève accepted in principle the Hegelian identification of Being as the circular or complete, and completely visible or speakable structure of Time.

Needless to say, Kojève was not simply a Hegelian, a Marxist, or a Heideggerian. The "wisdom" which he claimed to have achieved was decisively his own, and necessarily so, in view of the Marxist-Hegelian interpretation of history itself. Kojève believed that only in his own time had the final stage of world history transpired. Hegel was correct in his fundamental analysis, but wrong to believe that the Prussian monarchy embodied the final *Aufhebung* of the human spirit. Similarly, Marx was correct in part of his analysis of capitalism, class conflict, and the revolutionary route of history toward a condition of global enlightenment, which Kojève designated as the universal homogeneous world state. But Marx did not understand,

and could not know, that the internal contradictions of capitalism, as visible in the 19th century, would be temporarily solved by the techniques of the 20th century, as for example by Henry Ford, whom Kojève admired especially. The final stage of world history, as Kojève believed, is the global struggle, not between capitalist-bourgeois and proletariat, but between the rich and poor nations. In my opinion, this by now fashionable thesis was the weakest aspect of Kojève's "sagesse." The ostensible synthesis of theory and practice, as embodied in a universal homogeneous world state, would seem to be rather a total suppression of theoretical wisdom. To state only the obvious, when philosophy is transformed into nationalism, wisdom itself becomes an ideology, and instead of a homogeneous world state, we arrive at a perpetual state of global war. Nevertheless, Kojève's own intentions were to achieve a world altogether safe for philosophy (or wisdom): one in which the Kojèvian-Hegelian wisdom would be taught in the schools and embodied in the institutions of a consequently just global society. If this strikes the reader as absurd, let him ponder whether it is not the final and fully stated consequence of modern philosophy altogether. The Enlightenment, understood as the full revelation of truth to man's self-consciousness, does not terminate in a republic of letters, but in a state which embodies the truth and therefore necessarily excludes error. Modern democracy is the result of the failure, not the success, of the essential spirit of the Enlightenment. Kojève wished to transform that failure into success.

This introductory reflection may perhaps serve to indicate the context within which Kojève's "histoire raisonnée" of pagan philosophy must be understood. Kojève was not a professor, and in the academic sense, he was not a historian, of philosophy. I mean no disrespect to the legitimate excellence of scientific scholarship when I say that, as a philosopher, Kojève rejected the unselfconscious "objectivity" of the positivist historian, which derives ultimately from the (in Kojève's language) pseudo-philosophical speech of empiricism. The reason implicit in the "rational" story told by Kojève is the *Vernuft* of Hegel as mediated by Kojève himself. One might therefore say that Kojève's history is intended

to manifest the spirit (*Geist*) rather than the letter of the past. I do not mean by this that Kojève disregarded the objective status of the texts of pagan philosophy, but that he was concerned to express the spiritual significance of these texts, from the viewpoint of Hegelian wisdom. As a matter of fact, I believe that Kojève's interpretation of Parmenides and Heraclitus is very compelling, and infinitely more instructive than any "orthodox" or academic account with which I am familiar. But I cannot enter into these details in the space of a review. I shall concentrate in my summary upon the essential argument in the volume as a whole. This is justifiable from Kojève's own point of view, since, whatever the "scholarly" merits of his historical exegesis, their significance necessarily depends upon his explanation of discursive speech, or philosophy altogether. The volume before us is part of what was intended to be an encyclopedia of the Hegelian wisdom. Two more, completing the account of Greek philosophy through Proclus, are to be published subsequently. Kojève begins with a long introductory statement on the nature of philosophy, or rather of wisdom. And this will be our beginning as well. Wisdom is the complete discourse or system of knowledge, which develops or is verbally revealed in the world as the history of the human spirit, and most decisively, as the history of philosophy. Because of the temporal nature of discourse, the speech may be uttered only "one part at a time." But since the meaning or significance of each part depends upon its place within the whole, until such time as the whole has been uttered and wisdom achieved (or history essentially ended), the status of the part is at best probable or hypothetical. In other words, each partial speech may be contradicted, until such time as no further contradictions are possible without the repetition of something which has already been said. After a preliminary, and to my mind persuasive, discussion of pseudo- and anti-philosophical modes of speech, like historicism, mathematicism, and psychologism, which are equivalent to or necessarily terminate in silence because they cannot explain their own significance or provide a criterion for the difference between sense and nonsense, Kojève turns to the structure of purely or properly philosophical discourse. There are in principle three conceptions of

philosophy prior to Hegelian wisdom: the Platonic, the Aristotelian, and the Kantian. Prior to Kant, these conceptions are more or less incomprehensible, and essentially because they do not comprehend themselves. By this, Kojève means that they lack self-consciousness as well as comprehensiveness. Not merely are they radically incomplete (i.e., uncompletable in themselves or by their own principles), but they do not understand their own nature as philosophical discourse. Kant was the first to define philosophy by its method or way of speaking, rather than by its subject matter. This definition of philosophy as "critique" made it self-conscious, that is, conscious of its nature as the critique of *all* speech, and so, as universal, total speech: speech which talks to itself (cf. the Aristotelian *noēsis noēseōs*, which may be regarded as a pre-Hegelian anticipation of the nature of wisdom, but couched in terms of silence, or in such a way as to make speech impossible). Since knowledge is always discursive, a critique of discourse, or a complete account of every essential (and in that sense original or independent) speech, *including itself*, is necessarily a complete, and therefore circular, account, or rather exhibition, of knowledge. It is wisdom.

Once we disregard the pseudo-philosophical speeches (like those contemporary linguistic empiricisms which cannot account either for themselves or the difference between sense and nonsense, except by positing another speech, itself subject to the same ambiguities, *ad infinitum*), the history of philosophy may be understood as the dialectical progress, by assertion and contradiction, toward the final speech which demonstrates its conclusiveness by saying everything essential, including therefore the demonstration that nothing essentially new can ever be said. Until such time as the final speech is finally uttered (and not simply begun), not merely are all prior or partial speeches hypothetical or contradictable, but the announcement of wisdom is itself a mere hypothesis. This raises a difficulty which I do not believe Kojève was able to solve; indeed, he did not seem to be aware of it, so far as I can tell from this book. The sequence of speeches constituting the history of philosophy as culminating in the wisdom of Hegel reduces to the following schematism:

Hypo-thesis:	the intention to speak intelligibly
Thesis:	the first speech claiming to assert the sense or significance of things (as a whole)
Anti-thesis:	supposing and surpassing (by sublation) of the thesis it contradicts
Para-thesis:	pseudo-synthesis of thesis and anti-thesis, which fails primarily because it merely asserts them both; they then negate each other and reduce to silence

There are three forms of para-thesis, depending upon whether the hypo-thesis, thesis, or anti-thesis plays the privileged role. One might simplify this schema still further by the following observation. Whatever the thesis asserts is contradicted by the anti-thesis. Therefore the synthesis, which follows the synthetic para-thesis, by repeating both, necessarily says everything (assuming that this repetition is reflexive or self-explanatory). The various stages in the development of rational speech thus culminate in the synthesis or the circular speech of perfect wisdom, which, as complete, may be reiterated, but not expanded or in any way improved.

The insoluble problem which in my opinion is raised by this schematism turns upon the ostensibly provisory or hypothetical status of each step prior to the last. The student of Hegel, or Hegel himself, may presumably resolve his doubts as to the exhaustive or circular character of the Hegelian discourse by critically repeating it step by step; that is, he may, like Kojève, retrace the history of philosophy, in order to see whether the sum of these correctly repeated steps equals the complete and self-reflexive discourse of wisdom. But the situation of the pre-Hegelian, and so of Kojève's reader at any stage of the present volume, is quite different. Strictly speaking, for the pre-Hegelian, no step prior to the last is intelligible in itself. But if so, at any given step, there can be no way to distinguish between a genuine and a pseudo-philosophical speech. For example, let us consider the problem entailed by the assertion of the antithesis, which Kojève identifies with Heraclitus. How might Plato, who asserted the thetic parathesis, select Heraclitus rather than Thales, Empedocles, or Anaxagoras as the genuine instance of the anti-thesis of the Parmenidean thesis? The superiority of *A* to non-*A* as representative

of the anti-thesis, and hence as the best formulation of the negation of *T*, must have been visible to Plato by virtue of the accessibility of the standard of truth, significance, or comprehensiveness. Furthermore, even if we grant that the joint assertion of *T* and *A* in any form of the para-thesis leads finally to mutual cancellation or silence, Kojève himself maintains that some para-thetic speeches are better than others, or genuinely para-thetic as the others are not, and he selects Plato, Aristotle, and Kant as the representatives of these forms. Therefore, just as Plato was able to synthesize Parmenides and Heraclitus rather than (say) Melissus and Empedocles, so Kant was able to synthesize Plato and Aristotle rather than (say) Plotinus and Alexander of Aphrodisia. There is necessarily a difference, as it were, between two kinds of silence: the historically essential and the historically non-essential versions of the contradictory theses of any given epoch. The thesis, anti-thesis, and the three forms of the para-thesis must all be intelligible, in themselves or in their own time, precisely in order for them to serve as the essential constituents of the essential history of philosophy. And this intelligibility is itself a sufficient guarantee of the possibility of philosophy, *although not of wisdom,* as an intelligible speech, i.e., prior to the utterance of the complete Hegelian discourse. Kojève might try to meet this objection by demonstrating that the order of development in the essential history of philosophy is necessary or determined. But this necessity would have to be independent of the rational speech of human beings. This in turn would commit Kojève to an interpretation of the Hegelian *Geist* as dualistic or theistic, namely, as a trans-human God who enforces his will independently of the capacities of mankind. Such an interpretation, however, was rejected by Kojève, who always insisted that Hegel was an atheist, or that he posited the godhood of man (i.e., the sage). I am afraid that Kojève is forced into the contradictory position of denying and asserting the intelligibility of partial or properly philosophical speech. That he is not himself reduced to silence by this contradiction shows, not that he was a sage, but rather, that he was, despite himself, a philosopher. I might summarize and restate my fundamental objection to Kojève's teaching with the observation that his system is based ultimately

on the two premises that non-systematic speech is meaningless, and that the system, or complete and circular speech, is not merely possible but actual. The first premise is contradicted by Kojève's own books, or, as I have put it, by his own teaching. The second premise, I have tried to refute elsewhere. To this I add a final criticism. Kojève's formulation of philosophy or wisdom as (completable) speech offers no explanation as to how and why man speaks. In slightly different terms, it does not distinguish between pre- and post-philosophical silence. Especially in view of Kojève's analysis of desire in his lectures on the *Phänomenologie des Geistes,* this may seem a strange omission. The reduction of philosophy to discourse results in the impossibility of relating speech to non-verbal subjects or objects. As a result, we have not the overcoming of the division between subject and object, but a discourse which, even if we assume it to be circular or complete, floats in the void in a way rather like the *noēsis noēseōs* of a disembodied and impersonal god. But such a god cannot be distinguished from the void in which he floats. And such discourse tells us nothing about man and the world, and consequently nothing about itself as discourse of man in the world.

Perhaps Kojève believed that, since an account of desire is a speech, an account of speech is by that token an account of desire. But an account of desire is not desire; lacking the experience of desire, man could in fact give no conceivably accurate account of desire. It is rather the case that desire leads to speech, as Kojève knew very well. In any case, the discursive solipsism of this book is analogous to the basic (and introductory) defect of Kojève's Hegel interpretation, namely, the failure to explain why certain animals are marked by the desire for recognition, which is the decisive mark of the human being, and whose existence is explained by Kojève as a consequence of the desire for recognition. Hegel could not explain the emergence of life from the categories of logic, and Marx could not explain the emergence of history from nature. This is the historical background of the defect which I at least find in Kojève's wisdom. Such a defect, however, although incompatible with wisdom, is altogether compatible with philosophy. Kojève was a man who combined philosophical genius with a character of essential

sobriety and tranquility. I do not doubt that, were he alive, he would have an extraordinary reply to my perhaps human, all-too-human criticism. He faced the objections of his juniors as though they were his equals, because he honored, as well as, if not better than any man I have known, the injunction of the philosopher to seek and to encourage the truth, with no regard for false modesty or false pride. The present book, whose riches I have in no way managed to indicate, is both a joy in itself and because it leads us back to Kojève's lectures on the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. These in turn place us directly in the midst of that eternal conversation which, despite Kojève's strictures to the contrary, is man's only steadfast access to eternity. In that light, I recommend this book without reservation.

CHAPTER SIX

Negation and Dialectic

If we look at standard introductory texts on logic, we find that negation is normally introduced in what can only be described as a circular manner. This is virtually self-evident in the case of definitions that rely upon truth-tables, but it is equally true in other cases as well. Consider the following passage on the introduction and elimination of negation from a recent text that employs considerable rigor from the outset while attempting to explain what is involved in straightforward language: "A philosophical consideration arises from the perspective that rules of inference, not truth-tables, constitute the primary way of explaining the meanings of connectives. The version of -I (not-Introduction) which uses explicit contradictions is unsatisfactory from this point of view, since negation occurs in the formula $q\&\text{-}q$ to which the introduction rule for negation is applied, and so we would be explaining negation in terms of itself." The author uses instead rules asserting that if $\text{-}q$ is inferred from q, we may then infer $\perp$, the sign for "absurd," and so too with respect to the inference of $\text{-}p$ from p and $\perp$. He concludes his discussion of the introduction and elimination of negation as follows: "Of course, whether the formulation of -I in terms of $\perp$ is an improvement depends on whether absurdity can be understood independently of understanding negation."[1]

The obvious answer to the author's indirect question is that absurdity cannot be understood apart from negation because it blocks further inferences; and this is to say "one cannot continue in this line of inference," which in turn depends upon the sense of "not." Otherwise put, one can transfer the problem of the meaning of "not" to the meta-language and formulate rules for the introduction of the negation-sign within the formal calculus, which then serves as a syntactical function carrying no sense beyond its defined operation. However, nothing is gained by transforming one's logic

into a senseless game. The philosophical problem persists in the meta-language. I risk the assertion that there is no way in which to introduce negation into logic that does not depend upon a prior understanding of the concept of negation. We must then ask what it means to understand the concept of negation.

A concept is a human construction by means of which we "grasp" or apprehend some sense. For example, the concept of logic arises from our grasp of what we mean by inference, and this in turn arises from our grasp of the expression "this follows from that," and so on. But what do we grasp when we understand the concept of negation? The procedure followed by logic-books seems to imply that we are grasping the substitution of a truth-value by its opposite, e.g., "1" by "0" or "T" by "F." But truth-values designate truth, and truth in this context refers to a state of affairs expressible in a proposition. Are there negative states of affairs? I have not encountered many philosophers or logicians who wish to take this particular road. Or to take another example, one sometimes finds set-theoretical definitions of "not" or "nothing" as the conceptual basis for negation; for example, as the set containing the set containing the null-set. But the problem here is that we are employing an extensional definition of the absence of extension. Furthermore, "not" is not a set. Perhaps one can employ a set-theoretical definition of "not" in the meta-language of one's set-theory, but only by entering into the same circle that we noticed a moment ago in the case of introductory logic books.

There are two closely related problems at work here. The first is that the concept of "not," or more broadly, of "nothing," is itself unintelligible except upon the basis of our understanding of nothing. And as Plato showed at considerable length, where there is nothing, there is nothing to understand. The second difficulty is that those who are naturally gifted at logic and mathematics tend to look for syntactical or notational devices in order to eliminate "metaphysical" questions. They prefer to have something rather than nothing; but to borrow a witticism from Bertrand Russell employed in another connection, this is to prefer theft to honest toil. One makes no progress by excluding senses and restricting oneself

to syntax, because a syntax without sense is literally senseless, and so useless as an analysis of genuine philosophical problems. It is doubly defective because it means nothing.

Let me emphasize this last observation. The point is not simply that syntax requires supplementation by semantics. I am asserting that syntax is inseparable from, and is unintelligible as syntax without, semantical correlations. Even a pure calculus requires discursive definitions of legitimate formations of expressions, transformations of one expression into another, the conditions of inference, and so on. But I would go farther than this. My own view is that logic and mathematics are possible only on the basis of tacit metaphysical assumptions, one of which is that we understand nothing. I must repeat that this is different from understanding some concept or another of "nothing," because the term "nothing" must refer to something, and in this case there is nothing to which to refer. If I understand a concept that directs me to something, whether a symbol for absurdity, a set, or some discursive instruction for performing a syntactical operation, then I may be in a position to play a formalist game but I have understood nothing of nothing while believing myself to have understood something.

Those who are excessive lovers of clarity and distinctness will be disturbed by the expression "to understand nothing of nothing," but this is not sophistry or verbal trickery, as are formalist definitions of negation. Let us try to make a little analysis of "to understand nothing of nothing." If nothing cannot be understood, then could one say that to understand nothing of it is in fact the correct response? In other words, is it not an inference from the unstated conclusion that the problem of nothing is a pseudo-problem brought on by the incorrect use of language? If we take this road, however, we must replace the illicit expression by a legal surrogate; but this is simply to cover over a genuine problem with a defective because circular solution to a technical problem. It is to replace the serious problem of nothing by the trivial technical problem of how to define negation within a meta-language so that it may be employed consistently in a formal language or calculus. For what is the ostensible misuse of language that leads us to raise the question of nothing? In fact,

we have not simply postulated a metaphysical nonentity but we have instead been driven to pose the question by a straightforward reflection on the meaning of negation.

If therefore I say that I understand nothing of nothing because there is literally nothing to understand, I am invoking some concept in order to express this conclusion. But what concept? Even if I were employing a concept, and hence some definite linguistic entity, to negate the thesis that one must understand nothing, the term "nothing" in the immediately preceding clause is not itself the concept, but that to which the concept is being applied. I am in effect carrying out a rule of approximately the following sort: "apply negation to the proposition 'in order to understand negation, we must understand nothing.'" Please note that we are not following a rule to apply the concept of negation to the assertion that we must understand the concept of negation. This would be doubly absurd, since we must understand that concept in order to use it. What understanding then are we negating by its means? Those who regard the term "nothing" as referential, but as referring to a concept, and so to something, are insisting not only that the complete absence of reference is unintelligible, but that one can assert or establish this unintelligibility by a syntactical analysis of assertions to the contrary. To carry out this explanation, however, they must refer to the absence of all reference as a reference *to which they are not referring.*

The strange thing is that we do understand something of nothing, just as we understand something of indeterminateness or unlimitedness, to mention two prominent examples. We can formulate a concept of these by way of negation; thus the indeterminate is that which lacks, i.e., has no, determinateness, and determinateness can be defined in an apparently straightforward manner. But indeterminateness owes its intelligibility to negation, and as we have seen, the situation in this case is unique. But is it desperate? I believe that the situation is desperate if and only if we insist upon non-circular definitions of a formally rigorous type. We need at this point to turn away from logic and to ask ourselves how we speak of nothing in everyday language.

And such a reflection shows us almost immediately that the so-called "analysis" of ordinary language that labels this speech as incorrect is itself gratuitous and incorrect.

In a quite obvious sense there is no problem in referring to nothing; we do it by contrast with something. This is true in two different ways. In the first place, we refer to something in particular that is not present where we expected it. For example: I walk into a room where I was supposed to meet John and after inspecting its occupants I conclude that "John is not here." On the usual analysis, this sentence is supposed to mean that of all the persons present, none of them is John. But in the actual process of reasoning, I go through this operation of negative identification as a preliminary to the assertion that John is not here. The two operations are distinct, not equivalent. This is easily shown by the following consideration. John might be hiding somewhere in the room, say, behind the sofa. But I have tacitly inferred that this is unlikely. My reasoning goes something like this: "Since John is not identical with any of the persons I see here, and because it would be implausible to assume that he is concealed somewhere in the room, or that by some trick of shadows or flaw in my vision I am simply overlooking him, therefore I conclude that he is not here."

When I draw the inference that John is not here, I do not make a finite number of negative correlations between John and the persons in the room. Even to do this is to employ negation, which can hardly mean merely "not this person," but which, even if it did, would leave me with the task of explicating what I mean by "not." Surely "not this person" means something other than "(not) this person," where (not) designates the application of the rule for negation introduction. I still have to explain the conditions under which I introduce negation. But this to one side, the inference that John is not here is itself parasitical for its meaning upon the intelligibility of words like "nowhere" and "not at all," which refer somehow to the room rather than to the persons in it. They do not, of course, refer to the room as a physical object, but to a characteristic of the room as a place for the absence of John. To say that John is not here is also to imply that he is nowhere to be found in this room. But where is

"nowhere"? Is this term supposed to refer via negation to each of the places in the room, none of which contains John?

Apart from the technical difficulty of explaining how we are to negate every possible place in the room (for example, under the possibility that John has been shrunk to a dot by the same Martians whom Saul Kripke taught a generation of modal metaphysicians to invoke in the name of the principle of non-contradiction), we are now appealing to the intelligibility of absence in a sense that goes beyond the identification of a finite number of persons in the room. In other words, on the hypothesis of shrinkage, John could be anywhere in an infinite number of places. To say that he is nowhere in the room is to appeal tacitly to the intelligibility of a total absence of places. And if someone objects to the example of the finite room containing infinite places, we simply switch the example to the absence of John from the world, as in the case of death.

"Where is John?" "Nowhere." Or again: "What lies on the other side of the universe?" "Nothing." The simple fact is that ordinary language, when correctly used, is metaphysical in precisely the sense in which we are assured by linguistic therapists that it is not. In ordinary language, we invoke nothingness constantly and in countless ways, none of which can be explained as a reference to a concept, i.e., to something that refers to something. The so-called "syntactic" or "correct" analysis reduces ordinary language to gibberish. The correct philosophical procedure at this point is not to keep searching for a referent to terms like "not" and "nothing," but to *give up an excessively rigid allegiance to the doctrine of reference.*

The insistence upon trying to explain negation on the basis of syntactical rules is inseparable from the conviction that all conceptual puzzles have their root if not their solution in the distinction between identity and predication. And this distinction is inseparable from a theory of reference. According to such a theory, a noun is intelligible if it refers to a spatio-temporal particular or its fictional surrogate. Words like "nothing" are then glossed as metaphysical hypostatizations of the negation particle, which in turn is explained syntactically in the usual way. But this leads to the metaphysical notion of a plenum of Being, one which contains no

gaps but in which syntactic negations occur by a process of shifts in identity.

These shifts are ontic or linguistic. In an ontic shift, a thing exchanges one property for another, thereby legitimating a shift in a co-ordinate statement or set of statements from one predicate to another. But the ontic shift is not itself a linguistic shift. If an apple turns from red to brown, this is not because I have decided to change color words in my references to the apple. The reverse is the case; I change color-words because the apple has changed. But how does the apple undergo this change? The shocking fact is that all syntactical explanations of this change explain it as a *linguistic* change. But this is surely nonsensical. I can test the theory by calling all red apples brown and noting that no co-ordinate change occurs. Regardless of how I speak, the ontic change transpires or does not transpire. The "not" in my reference to the change or lack thereof may very well refer to a concept by which I assist myself in thinking the ontic negation, but it is not the same as that negation.

If it were true that one could only identify something by its predicates, then one could never identify anything, since we are in no position to know that we have grasped the essential predicates. The truth is that we do not identify anything by exclusive reliance upon predication. What happens instead is that we grasp an entity by its look or pattern as a whole; this is what Plato and Aristotle call *noēsis*. And only after we have apprehended the entity as a unity with a definite internal articulation are we able to proceed to the task of picking out what are for us its defining properties, or as we call them by their linguistic equivalents, predicates. *Noēsis* is not a part of the analysis of identity and predication. It is not an analysis at all, but neither is it a Kantian synthesis. However, it makes no difference for my present purposes whether we argue from Platonist or Kantian premises. The point is that no one identifies things like cows, trees, or persons by uttering predicational statements. We cannot build up the unity of a perceived or cognized object by gluing together predications. We require a pattern in accord with which the gluing-process can begin, continue, and end at the proper point of identification. I have to leave it here at this extremely concise claim.

Those who disagree are invited to explain how we identify things via predication. The usual result of these attempts is to dissolve the world into a contingent product of unintelligible linguistic operations and from here, the step to the chaos of deconstruction and postmodernism is a very short one. In fact, it has already been taken by someone with no interest in predication: Nietzsche, who, despite his lack of interest, is the God of all philosophies of language that begin with a theory of reference and predication.

All this by way of preparation for the main point. Even the Platonic doctrine of *noēsis* or the Kantian doctrine of transcendental synthesis is inadequate as a basis for explaining the intelligibility of nothing. For these doctrines share the axiom that to be is to be something, with which I agree; but they exclude the possibility of understanding "the thing that is not," as Jonathan Swift's intelligent horses put the point to Lemuel Gulliver. But I am not suggesting that we need to turn to doctrines like those of Heidegger, which (as I have argued elsewhere) are inadequate to our problem because they also refer to a finite "Nichts" or to what Hegel calls "determinate negation." We need to reflect more carefully, and without metaphysical prejudices about language, reference, and so on, on our everyday speech about nothing. I have been arguing here, not that nothing is an obscure metaphysical mystery (although it may well be), but that it is a familiar participant in our daily lives and discourses. It is ordinary language that shows us that we can understand without referring to something. In that sense, ordinary language is metaphysical.

The kind of investigation of ordinary language that I have in mind is obviously not grammatical or syntactical in the usual senses of the term, although grammatical and syntactical considerations can certainly be brought into play, so long as they are not tied indissolubly to the standard doctrines of reference and predication. I suggest that we call the relevant investigation "dialectical." This term has a dual heritage, Platonic and Hegelian. In the present context, I can say only a few words about dialectic. The essential point is that Hegel understood the limitations of a Platonic dialectic that is rooted in static and entirely separate formal units. There are

fundamentally two kinds of Platonic forms, which I shall call ontological and phenomenological. Ontological forms are elements of intelligibility like rest, change, being, otherness, but also one, many, limit, unlimited, and so on. According to the dialogue *Sophist*, "nothing" (*to mēdamōs on*) cannot be a formal unit; it must therefore be analyzed into "otherness." I have already explained why this is impossible in my extended example of John's absence from the room. To say that John is not here is not to say that someone other than John is in fact present.

Hegel saw clearly that ontological forms cannot be radically independent from one another. He tacitly extended this insight to Plato's phenomenological forms, i.e., paradigms of spatio-temporal particulars like cow, tree, man (moral properties and relations constitute a special problem for this classification, but not one that affects my present point). Here I believe that he was wrong. Phenomenological looks have inner structure of a logical or ontological sort ("cow" contains "mammal" but not "horse," as well as "same," "other," and so on). But the interdependency or dialectical movement from one of these structural elements to the other does not transform the phenomenological looks into one another.

This apart, Hegel is extremely helpful because he locates negativity within the very dialectical change by which ontological elements are related to one another. In slightly different language, nothing is a constitutive dimension of being, i.e., of each "something." This provides us with a starting-point for thinking through how it is that one thing is not only other than, but *not* all the others. Hegel grasps the "presence" or activity of nothing as a differentiating factor, but he also includes it within being, as I have just indicated, and hence he is committed to a determinate or finite negation. Despite the apparent beginning of Hegel's logic, nothing is only hypothetically separate from being; in fact, the two are ever present, even (in a special sense) identical dimensions of becoming. A successful dialectic, one that is capable of meeting the challenge of the intelligibility of our everyday allusions (as distinguished from "references") to nothing, will have to move outside the rationalist tradition, to which Hegel and Heidegger as well as Plato and Aristotle belong (and presumably all

logicians and mathematicians), a tradition wedded indissolubly to the notion of finite negation. This is because, as I can only hope to have hinted in this brief paper, finite negation also invokes the intelligibility of the "altogether not" that Parmenides was apparently the first to forbid us to mention. Unfortunately, he had to mention it in order to forbid its mention, thereby exposing the radical defect of all analyses of "not" or negation that take their bearings by reference and predication.

Note

1 Graeme Forbes, *Modern Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 104.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Is Thinking Spontaneous?

I

The English word "spontaneous" is derived from the Latin noun *spons*, which occurs almost exclusively in the ablative, *sponte*; Varro glosses the term as follows: *id est voluntate*. To act *sponte sua* is thus to act freely or voluntarily; and this is the sense of the first use of "spontaneous" cited in the Unabridged Oxford English Dictionary from Hobbes's "Essay on Liberty," written in the Seventeenth Century. But we also refer to an act as spontaneous to indicate that it was not prepared by antecedent deliberation or a conscious exercise of the will. In the first sense, spontaneity is obviously connected to autonomy; in the second sense, it is not. Spontaneous acts of the second sort are similar to nonhuman occurrences for which no natural cause can be assigned, or which are due to chance.

The relation between natural and spontaneous occurrences is complicated. An event like a fire can occur spontaneously in the sense that no one intended or consciously caused it, yet it remains in accord with natural laws. Even more complicated is what we mean by the expression "a spontaneous person." Such a person no doubt acts easily and without considerable advance deliberation, but this is not in itself a proof of free will. Spontaneous acts may arise on the basis of extremely rapid processes of calculation, but this in itself does not distinguish them from the operations of computers.

If there is a difference between human beings and calculating machines, it must lie in a difference as well as a connection between spontaneity and autonomy. It is not the mere manifestation of laws that is spontaneous, but the freedom with which they are given. And freedom is a characteristic of human beings when it is associated with consciousness and intentionality. Differently stated, I will call behavior "spontaneous" if there is no rule for the application of rules that govern part or all of the behavior in question. Whether

or not this is Kant's official definition of spontaneity, it is certainly Kantian in spirit. Kantian or not, however, it is my contention that thinking is both spontaneous and autonomous. It is rule-governed but not algorithmic. I believe that this is a sound approach to the analysis of thinking, but I have some modifications to introduce into the Kantian formulation.

The main point can be stated as follows. Freedom for Kant means, of course, not arbitrary action in accord with the vagaries of the will, but rather action, whether cognitive or practical, in accord with rules. Nevertheless, the freedom of thinking is spontaneous because it is not derived from or regulated by an external source, whether this source be God or nature. This means inevitably that thought is free because it makes its own rules. Yet Kant argues that thought is bound by these rules in two senses. First, it cannot make rules other than those in which it necessarily actualizes when thinking the world of objects of experience. Second, our conception of the dignity of rationality binds us to obey the categorical imperative in the domain of morality.

In this paper, I will be concerned primarily with the first or theoretical sense of spontaneity. My intention is not to provide a philological or historical exegesis of Kant's doctrine of spontaneity, but to show how a fundamental philosophical problem is introduced by his teaching. Stated with introductory succinctness, the problem lies in the relation between spontaneity and necessity. As rules, the results of thinking are necessary; but if they are spontaneous, they can be replaced by other spontaneous rules or laws. In this case the rules are contingent, and there is no rule that prevents us from replacing one set of contingent rules with another.

By way of transition to the main section of this paper, I call your attention to an important distinction. The term "thinking" is itself ambiguous or leads directly to an ambiguity. It is easy to confuse thinking as a psychological process with the ontological status of what one thinks about. Under ordinary circumstances, no one would be likely to say that the perception of a tree is the same as the tree that we perceive. Not even Kant would go this far; but he does hold that the tree as an "object of experience" is constructed

within the unity of consciousness from various acts of pure thinking applied to sensations. As I am about to argue, it is virtually impossible on Kantian premises to preserve the integrity of the distinction between the process of thinking and the ontological independence of what one thinks about.

We may also distinguish between a subjective representation, such as the perception of a tree or the psychological process by which we construct a concept of trees, and the objective meaning of that concept. Such a distinction was in fact drawn by thinkers like Bolzano, Frege, and Husserl.[1] The question that was previously addressed to the difference between the perception or concept of the tree and the tree itself, is now transferred to the difference between the subjective and objective representation. If neither of these two distinctions can be drawn, then the tree in the first case and the meaning of the concept "tree" in the second case are themselves products of the psychological process of thinking.

This process may be conceived as either transcendental or empirical. The ostensible superiority of the transcendental thesis is that it avoids psychologism, i.e., the reduction of things and meanings to the status of empirical and subjective constructions or particulars, which cannot account for universality or necessity, and thus not for objectivity or truth. On the other hand, the transcendental thesis has the defect that it places an apparently impenetrable screen between the activity of thinking and the beings to which the meanings of concepts refer. Even if these meanings are "objective" in the sense of universal and necessary, the truth that they manifest is a spontaneous production of the activity of thinking. With no access to a natural or ontologically independent world of beings about which we are thinking, thought is inevitably transformed into the thinking of its own products.[2]

The question then arises as to how to justify the validity of any particular analysis of the laws of transcendental thinking. I would restate this as the question of how to distinguish between the necessity of rationality and the contingency of imagination. In more concrete terms, the problem is as follows. There seem to be only three possible relations between thinking and what we think. Suppose

that I am thinking about a tree. Either I think the tree itself, or some perceptual and conceptual representation of the tree, or else I think a semantic entity which I will call the meaning of the concept "tree." If I think the tree itself, then there seems to be no distinction between being and thinking; I become the tree by thinking it. As Aristotle puts it, "the soul is somehow the beings."[3] "Somehow" allows for a distinction, but it is not very informative. If I think a perceptual and conceptual representation of the tree, then it must be explained how this representation corresponds to the tree; but the attempt to explain this leads to an infinite regress. Finally, if thinking about the tree is thinking the sense or meaning of its concept, the same problem arises as in the case of representations. The only difference here is that the meaning may be regarded as "objective" or distinct from psychological processes. But I must now explain a three-term relation, namely, that in which the representation mediates between the meaning and the tree.

In short, the problem of the spontaneity of thinking is this: unless we are prepared to accept the absurd thesis that we become what we think, or to give a satisfactory account of the Aristotelian "somehow" (*pōs*), it seems that we must admit that the activity of thinking separates us from what we think about. In the Kantian version, thinking separates us from the thing in itself, or gives rise to transcendental philosophy. It then remains to be seen whether transcendental cognition can be prevented from deterioration into the very psychologism it was intended to overcome.

The problem becomes less severe, but is by no means dissolved, when we see that thinking has no structure. Whereas thinking produces structure, it is not a machine but an activity; and this is the sense in which I suggest that thinking is spontaneous. We are free to make contact with items in the world because of the openness of our cognitive power, and this is the basis for all productive work, including that of the imagination and the will. This is what Aristotle means by the elliptical statement that the soul is somehow the beings. The progress of epistemology, or the attribution of structure to the intellect, results in a steady separation of intellect from beings, or the transformation of *onta* into objects, that is, artifacts of cognition.

When the rules for the production of these artifacts are conceived as spontaneous, our epistemologies collapse into contingency.

Thinking can be spontaneous in at least the following two senses: (1) as independent of any regulation whatsoever, whether from an external world or the inner necessity of the activity of thinking; (2) as independent of external regulation by a world of things in themselves, although bound by the rules of its own activity. It will be my contention that the assertion of sense (2) deteriorates because of internal inconsistencies into the assertion of sense (1). But sense (1) leads to chaos, not to an explanation of what we actually do when we think. As is the case with all philosophical problems, our only basis for avoiding chaos is to cling to the facts of everyday life, and to accept no explanation that contradicts them. Our goal must be to come as close as possible to an account of thinking things rather than concepts or meanings, but in such a way as not to become identical with them.

My thesis could also be stated as follows: the reason why we can distinguish between subjective and objective representations, or in other words between spontaneous creations of the imagination, transcendental or empirical, as regulated by the will, and meanings that are the same for anyone who is capable of grasping them, is because this distinction is rooted in a world that is not produced by our thinking. The meaning of the concept "tree" is objective only because there exist trees to which we have access by perceiving and thinking. But the same is true of any concept, whether of a moral property, an aesthetic value, a logical relation, a mathematical function, and so on. These concepts have objective meanings only because we have understood something about the world, including ourselves as thoughtful residents in it, that is not merely a product of the activity of thinking.

In short, I shall follow the procedure of distinguishing between thinking as a process and the "objects" of thought, by which expression I mean entities like sensations, perceptions, concepts, arguments and intuitions of form. But the objects of thought will be held to be distinct from and to refer to or to derive their meaning from beings in a world that is not produced by thinking, or from properties or

relations of those beings. Thinking could then be spontaneous in two distinct senses: (1) the process could be autonomous or neither reducible to nor derivable from other processes, e.g., neurophysiological processes; (2) whatever the sources or causes of the process of thinking, the objects of thought could be produced spontaneously within that process, rather than caused by or derived from beings external to the process. I am here interested in the question of spontaneity in the second sense. In this sense, the question is whether the process of cognition produces its objects, which are themselves the beings that we think; or in other words whether the maxim that we know only what we make is true because thinking is making.

II

In turning now to Kant, I will begin as cautiously as possible, by wrapping myself in the protective mantle of my friend and colleague, Henry Allison. In his book, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*,[4] Allison points out that the function of spontaneity in Kant's doctrine of rational agency is to be understood not via the moral theory but in "his views on the spontaneity of understanding and reason in their epistemic functions" (36). Allison then provides a convenient summary of those views, which may itself be summarized as follows. Spontaneity is immediately evident in apperception, or the awareness of ourselves as possessing two faculties, understanding and reason. In the exercise of the first faculty, we take something as something, or make predicative judgments, and as Allison puts it, we also know "in some sense" what we are doing. ("In some sense" sounds suspiciously Aristotelian.) In the second case, we take premises as justifying the conclusion or, at a higher level, as Kant says at B576 of the *First Critique*, "reason...frames for itself with perfect spontaneity an order of ideas." Allison glosses this passage as follows: "reason has the capacity to form ideas and to regulate enquiry in accordance with these ideas. Such formation and regulation involve spontaneity because, rather than simply reflecting a pregiven order of nature, reason projects an order of its own 'in accordance with ideas,' that is, it generates a set of norms and goals of explanation in term of which scientific enquiry must proceed" (38).

Guided by Allison's formulation, we may venture forward a step or two into the *First Critique*. The fundamental distinction is of course between spontaneity and receptivity. At B132, Kant says that pure or original apperception is "that self-consciousness which, while producing the representation 'I think,' which must be able to accompany all [other representations], and is one and the same in all consciousness, cannot be accompanied by any further representation." Kant calls this apperception "an act of spontaneity, i.e., it cannot be understood as pertaining to sensibility."

Since it is via sensibility or *Empfindungen* that we come into contact with the things in themselves, or with what was called in the pre-Copernican terminology the order of nature, it is obvious that apperceptive spontaneity frees us from subordination to such an order. We become the masters and possessors of nature in a sense related to that intended by Descartes. Nature is constituted by the activity of apperception, that is, by understanding and reason. I note in passing that we also free ourselves from subordination to a transcendent God by the spontaneous formulation of moral rules which unite rationality and autonomy.[5]

The spontaneity of understanding plays the active role in the constitution of objects, whereas the spontaneity of reason projects the unity and totality of the world as the theater within which rational agents carry out their theoretical and practical roles. Kant also speaks in the *First Critique* of transcendental freedom as the absolute spontaneity of a cause that is not part of the natural sequence of causes within the world of appearances that is constituted by the synthesis of sensibility and thinking (B474, B501). Since the spontaneity of thinking is not itself part of that sequence, which latter is instead a result of the synthesis of sensibility and thinking, the only obstacle to the transcendental freedom of our faculty of thinking would seem to be its limitation by and dependence upon sensibility.

Despite his insistence to the contrary, Kant himself takes a crucial step toward this emancipation of thinking by the very doctrine of sensibility as receptive. Sensibility is rooted in sensations (*Empfindungen*) which arise from the impingement of what is in itself unknowable onto the pure forms of intuition. The resultant

sensations are thus not strictly speaking received, but are rather produced in response to the unknown and unknowable outer stimuli.[6] It has often been observed that, by the terms of his own doctrine, Kant has no right to posit the unknowable things in themselves as causal agents of our sensations. Whether for this reason or for some other, Kant himself, as is evident in the *Opus postumum*, tended in his later years to think of sensations too as produced by the cognitive activity.[7]

History teaches us that it did not take long for philosophers to dissolve the limitation of sensibility on the absolute freedom of spontaneous thinking. Somewhat more difficult, but not beyond the scope of the human imagination, was the dissolution of what I will call an "internal" restriction on spontaneous thought by categories and regulative Ideas. The essential point of the argument can be restated as follows: we know that the world is intelligible, and intelligibility includes knowledge of necessity and causality. But necessity and causality can be known only if they are produced by thought itself. Since the being and the knowability of objects depend upon and are consequences of the activation of these transcendental products, it follows that "the world" of objective experience is a product of thinking. At this point the question arises: why could not thinking produce some other structure of intelligibility, e.g., some other table of categories or some other manner of conceiving orderly succession in phenomena? Why is knowing a world not synonymous with a way of world-making?

Kant in effect rejects this alternative by pointing first to the world as we experience it, and second to his theoretical conception of the nature of rationality. But the first procedure is inefficacious, since Kant denies that the world as we experience it is self-explanatory; in fact, Kant follows the early modern scientifically oriented philosophers in insisting that we disregard the everyday or apparent world, precisely in order to understand it as a world of appearances (in the technical sense of that term). Note that this is already tantamount to denying that thinking puts us into direct touch with an independent world, of which we ourselves are members; instead, we are in touch with conceptual constructions. Kant in effect substitutes

for everyday experience a theoretical explanation of the inner or genuine nature of experience.

Differently stated, we experience the world in many ways, and Kant is attempting to articulate the principles of rational experience. Reliance upon a certain conception of rationality that is derived from actual scientific knowledge, is at least empirically or historically unpersuasive, since the progression of knowledge produces new categories and, even worse, new doctrines according to which categorial structure is a product of the imagination. It could also be said to be circular, since the rejection, for example, of continuous creation is certainly motivated by the rationalist desire to render the foundations of the world accessible to human intelligence.

Kant's doctrine of the spontaneity of thinking was plainly intended by him as an essential ingredient in the reconciliation of rationality and freedom. The spontaneity of thinking, as conceived by Kant, frees us from an incomprehensible deity but also from an independent and finally inscrutable nature. It saves rationality from skepticism as well as from determinism. Skepticism is conquered by the ostensible demonstration that thinking produces or spontaneously actualizes as the rules of world-order. Mankind is preserved from determinism because the rules bind only the world as produced from the synthesis of thinking and sensing; they do not, in other words, bind the spontaneous thinker.

Kant may never have noticed the extraordinarily dangerous implications, or possible consequences, of his doctrine of spontaneity. I believe that this is because of what may be called a certain "old-fashioned" scorn for the imagination understood as fantasy rather than in its transcendental sense. It can also be explained as a consequence of his extreme confidence in scientific rationalism. Perhaps one could summarize the complex situation in Kant in something like this manner: By asking us to conceive the world "as if" it were constituted in accord with the Kantian hypothesis, Kant comes dangerously close to subordinating reason to the imagination. By virtue of the same capacity to conceive the world "as if" it obeyed Kant's rules and regulations, I can also conceive the world "as if" it did not obey those rules and regulations. This tendency is encouraged by the

inner link between spontaneity and the will. In addition, the will and the fantasy are natural allies; one suggests and the other demands. In the Twentieth Century, the emancipation of the imagination is as visible in the metaphysics of modal logic, with its reliance upon possible worlds, as it is in postmodernist deconstruction, for which the world is a text that cannot be deciphered, since to read is to write, and thus to erase what one is attempting to read. One hardly needs to emphasize the concomitant emancipation of the will.

I have already stated my opinion that the fundamental weakness underlying Kant's doctrine is his assumption that the spontaneous manifestation of rational order is not itself contingent. Kant made the daring assumption, no doubt carried away by Newtonian mechanics on the one hand and the apparent indubitability of mathematics on the other, that mankind was in possession, not merely of the paradigm of absolute knowledge, but of absolute knowledge itself. This is a later version of what I take to be the Cartesian assumption that once we are in possession of the true method, we are in effect wise, even though the actual accumulation of positive knowledge of particulars, or the continuous application of the method to new cases, may be an unending task.

Kant's root assumption can be restated as follows: he took it for granted that, to the extent that everyday experience is intelligible, it must accord with the rules and methods of the mathematical and experimental sciences. Kant subordinated common sense or everyday experience to science in this sense of the term. He did not take his bearings, as in the pre-Copernican epoch of philosophy was still possible, by the commonsense world of everyday life in its pre-scientific character. This world is for Kant just a swarm (*Gewühl*: A111), heap (*Haufen*: A122), or rhapsody (B195) of sensations, at best governed by empirical laws of association and at worst indistinguishable from illusions and dreams.

Of the many consequences of this assumption, I mention just one. Since it is thinking that synthesizes the swarm of sensations into the perceived object, or in other words since the perceived object is the same as the object of cognition, this raises the problem of false perceptual identification, and with it, the famous

problem of the distinction between judgments of perception and judgments of experience. A false perceptual identification must be a judgment of perception; in other words, judgments of experience must always be correct.[8] The judgments of perception "require no pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject." "The judgment of experience must therefore add to the sensible intuition and its logical connection in a judgment (after it has been rendered universal by comparison) something that determines the synthetic judgment as necessary and therefore as universally valid."[9]

Pace Beatrice Longuenesse, I see no difference between the judgment of perception and the perceptual identification via the association of sensations as described by British empiricism. But whether or not this is so, such a judgment cannot be true for Kant in any objective sense; it is only what seems to me to be so at the moment of the perception. Truth enters into the picture only with judgments of experience. But there is no room here for falsity, and this makes the appeal to truth problematic. Furthermore, the perceived or phenomenological "looks" of sensory objects, e.g., of a dog, consist of non-perceptual categories and rules for schematization which are sufficiently general to be universally applicable, and sensory material that is sufficiently amorphous to leave the empirical object without an intrinsic nature. In short, the analysis or explanation of how we perceive a dog is equally valid for the perception of any four-footed animal, and hence it is no explanation of any particular perceptual act whatsoever.

Kant is thus faced with the difficulty of explaining the unity of the transcendental structure of every perceived object with its amorphous empirical content, or in other words of producing a dog as an object of experience, i.e., of empirical science, and so as constructed by the full transcendental machinery, that is also a contingent, historically changing being, and more specifically, of deriving a definite phenomenological look, the look of the dog, from rules on the one hand and chaotic sensation on the other.

In short, the object of experience is an interpretation from the standpoint of experience, and a transcendental construction from

the standpoint of the critical philosophy. Kant transformed the view, common to the early modern philosopher-scientists, that the world of everyday experience is an illusion or epiphenomenon of the genuine, scientifically accessible world, by imposing transcendental order onto the illusion. But if order is transcendental, then it is of course not immanent, i.e., it is not a characteristic of experience apart from thinking. By making order a product of rational thought, Kant prepared the ground for the transformation of theory, or the discovery of rational order, into interpretation, or the imaginary creation of a model of rationality.

But an interpretation of necessity as the spontaneous actualization of thinking is itself a spontaneous actualization of thinking. If the laws of order arise spontaneously, they do not lose their spontaneous nature from the fact of their actual authority. If it is a matter of the spontaneity of thinking that $2 + 2 = 4$, then another surge of spontaneity could produce non-standard integers, or still more radically, a world in which the principle of non-contradiction no longer holds. Kant cannot block this possibility merely by insisting that his model is final; and there is no way in which to demonstrate the finality of any interpretation of natural order, if natural order is itself an interpretation, i.e., if there is no access to nature apart from or in advance of the choice of an interpretation.

Let me now summarize my preceding remarks. If thinking is spontaneous, then all doctrines of order and structure, hence of rationality and intelligibility, are contingent. In the language of modal logic, necessity is possible, not necessary; that is, what counts as necessary is relative to one's modal logic; and this choice in turn is a function of the spontaneous exercise of thinking, or in other words, of the imagination and the will. In the language of semantics, the objectivity of meanings is defined by the will, not by beings in the world. The next step is to replace semantics by syntactics, or meanings by rules for the use of terms designating concepts. But rules, as spontaneous, are arbitrary, not transcendental.

This situation arises when order, structure, rule-governed thinking, or more comprehensively, rational thought, is separated from everyday experience—when everyday experience is defined as a

Gewühl or swarm of deteriorated antecedent interpretations. Kant's critical philosophy does not resemble a formal calculus, but it is a *model* of experience in exactly the same sense that mathematicians construct models as interpretations of formal calculi. Kant's critical philosophy is a model constructed to explain the formal structure of experience. The fact that Kant's model is not written in the language of mathematics, or that it cannot itself be formalized, is in the present context irrelevant.

The transformation of philosophy into model-theory, or in other words of theory into interpretation, is rooted in the previously noted unofficial axiom of modern philosophy that we know only what we make. This axiom is understood to mean that we make the objects of our thought *within* the process of thought and then project these objects "outward," whether onto extension in the void, unknowable things in themselves, or sheer nothingness. What we are no longer taken to do is to apprehend beings that exist and subsist externally to and independently from the process of thinking, i.e., that we apprehend them *as* they exist or as *what* they are.

Experience is so to speak "formalized" or defined within a model. But the relativity of experience to the model means that experience is contingent, since models are themselves not necessary or imposed onto us, but contingent products of thinking. The models are themselves spontaneous in the sense that they depend upon a mixture of human intentions, perspectives, traditions or antecedent scientific doctrines, and so on. They are of course not spontaneous in the sense of coming into existence *ex nihilo*. Models are obviously responses to experience and their adequacy is determined by "comparing" them to experience. But this is a circular procedure, since what we mean by experience is itself a derivative of our models.

In fact, model-builders proceed inconsistently, since they assume the stability or independence of experience in the process of checking the adequacy of the model. But this stability or independence cannot itself be due to some other model; in this case the process of checking models would be like checking the consistency of one formal theory within, and so relative to, another. Science would then be surrealism or perhaps a kind of literary criticism in which

one imaginative interpretation of the text of the world is checked in the light of another imaginary interpretation. This process is also known as axiomatic mathematics.

This was of course not Kant's intention. Kant assumed that the spontaneity of thinking served as the guarantee of the complete accessibility or intelligibility of the structure of the world to its maker; he also assumed that arbitrariness was excluded by the fact that spontaneous thinking must actualize in the shape of concepts, categories, Ideas, or rules. Aristotle defines man as the animal who possesses *logos*. In Kant, we see the ancestor of Heidegger's definition of man as the animal who is possessed by *logos*. What Kant did not anticipate was the contingent status of the efficacy of *logos*, or what Heidegger calls its "historicity" (*Geschichtlichkeit*).

This is the background of the problem of spontaneity as it emerges from the philosophy of Kant. If my sketch has been accurate, it would seem to be the case that, if there is any chance of avoiding or resolving the problem, it depends upon our reversing the so-called Copernican revolution, and returning to the pre-Kantian situation, in which thought conforms to the object, or, as it should then be called, the entity or being, rather than the object to thought. In my opinion, something like this is indeed necessary; but as I have just stated the alternative, it is too general and in fact, merely a shift from one extreme to another. Without entering into elaborate historical detail, let us briefly consider the major implications of the pre-Kantian hypothesis, namely, that thinking conforms to the object of thought (more precisely, to the thing or entity).

III

On the Kantian hypothesis, to say that the object conforms to thinking is to say that the object of cognition, perceptual as well as conceptual, is a product of the cognitive process. To be sure, Kant insists that the object is, as Henry Allison puts it, one aspect of the independently existing entity or thing in itself.[10] However, the object or *Erscheinung* is the only aspect that is accessible to cognition, as distinct from speculative and hence unscientific thinking.

In my opinion, even if we accept the "two-aspect" interpretation of the "phenomenon/noumenon" distinction, the thing in itself has the status of a hypothesis or, to employ a Hegelian expression, a *Gedankending*, an entity of thought, and so, of that which is immediately open to interpretation in two different ways, either as itself produced by thinking, and so no longer a thing in itself, or in the more extreme case, as a phantom of the imagination. In short, conformity of the object to thinking, even if it is initially asserted to rest upon the independent subsistence of the thing that underlies the thought, leads directly to the disappearance of the independently subsisting being. There are no more beings but only objects. Thinking is now spontaneous in the sense that it may think whatever it wills.

On the reverse hypothesis, namely, that thinking conforms to the object (which is of course not an object in the sense of a projection of a subject), it seems at first that there is no reason to deny spontaneity, and so freedom, to thought. In order for thinking to conform to what it thinks, it must be initially independent. One conjures up the scenario of a thinker approaching a candidate for thought and directing his or her attention to it, conforming to it in order to apprehend it, but not thereby sacrificing the integrity of the activity of cognition. The thinker can turn away from the candidate, cease to consider it, or indeed, imagine it in a variety of contexts or identities that deviate from those which are initially given.

This scenario is defective for more than one reason. In the first place, it confuses the process of thinking with the status of the things thought. I may be free to think or not to think, even though, once I begin to think, I am compelled to think this rather than that. This gives rise to a second difficulty, which turns upon what we mean by "conformity" to the object, i.e., to the being. The word "conformity" suggests a common form; in other words, the process of cognition is one in which thought not simply shares, but receives, the form of the being, and so is "informed" in the sense of being *enformed* or shaped by it. In this case, the process of thinking resembles that in which there is a continuous changing of forms within the intellect, something like an animate and sentient

slide-projector being operated by a god who changes the slides and thereby alters the show, not on an external screen, but within the slide-projector itself.

If conformity means literally "having a common form," then there is no spontaneity in thinking but rather comprehensive subordination to, and definition by, the object of cognition. Whether man possesses *logos* or *logos* possesses man, we think as we are told. Or rather, we do not think at all, except in the restricted and highly artificial sense of becoming the form of the thing that we cognize. A tree does not think by virtue of exhibiting the look or *eidos* "tree." If therefore my intellect takes on the form of the tree through its conformity with the being of the tree, it would seem to be as thoughtless as the tree. Indeed, it *is* a tree, in the decisive sense of "is."

It is also worth noting that the doctrine of strict conformity shares the defect of Kantianism in being unable to distinguish between cognition and perception. To perceive a tree is to know that it is a tree that I perceive. But to know a tree is to conform with or assume its form. In other words, the distinction between recognition and knowledge of essential or defining properties is inexplicable. For what does it mean to recognize or identify something as a tree, if not to think "this is a tree"? And how am I to think that, except by a conformity of thinking to the being, i.e., the tree? There are not here two processes, one in which I am shown a photograph of a tree, and another in which I am asked to identify it. Or rather, if there are two processes, then thinking is not conformity with the thing, but detachment from it.

Let me turn directly to this alternative interpretation of the pre-Kantian thesis, in order to see whether it brings us closer to the truth, or at least to a plausible account of our actual experience. Suppose then that thinking is not assuming a form, i.e., taking on a definite shape or look, but rather trying to identify more precisely something seen at a distance. This is of course not intended as an exact description but merely as an introductory metaphor. If it is helpful, we can think of this step as a shift back from Aristotle to Plato. Let us note first that in this metaphor, thinking conforms to,

in the sense of approaching, an independent being rather than leaping spontaneously into action by constituting the object of thought. On the other hand, the form of the candidate for thought does not itself leap spontaneously into our thoughts with a tyrannical determination that leaves no room for reflection.

To think something is not to become it but to consider it. This is the sense in which I take Husserl's observation that intuition is not thinking but supplies evidence to thinking.[11] If the strict-conformity explanation is adopted, it becomes immediately necessary to introduce a supplementary hypothesis of two intellects, one that conforms to the form and another that reflects upon the state of the first intellect. But this leads to an infinite regress, since the only way in which the second intellect can consider or think about the status of the first intellect is by conforming to its assumed form. Thus a third intellect is required to reflect upon the result, and so on forever. I might also mention a related difficulty. If thinking is strict conformity, then we can only think of one thing at a time. But in this case, reasoning, inferring, or arguing, i.e., consecutive thought, becomes impossible. We cannot compare two thoughts, but only change forms in a discontinuous and so thoughtless manner.

These problems are not removed, but occur in slightly different form as a consequence of the Kantian thesis, i.e., on the assumption that thinking is constituting the object. We must, I think, reject both the constitution-thesis as well as the strict-conformity thesis and look more closely at the thesis of detachment from but approach toward the candidate for thought. On this thesis, thinking is not spontaneous in the sense that it does not produce its objects, or at least not all of them. But it is spontaneous in the sense that it must engage in activity that is independent of control by the things about which it is thinking. The control on thought must come from the purposes for which we think, and only secondarily from the things or objects of thought. As a corollary, I note that freedom of thought is now not only possible but a necessary feature of the activity of thinking. I cannot know the truth unless I am free to err. To know something is not to be it; the thesis that being and thinking are the same is just unthinkable, not to say absurd.

It does not however follow that the thesis of detached approach is free of all difficulties. To mention what will be for many its most disappointing limitation, it does not tell us what thinking is like. But this is because thinking is *sui generis*. It is not like anything else nor can it be analyzed into its constituents, because it has none. The partisan of detached approach, in other words, rejects epistemology or the attribution of cognitive structure to consciousness, because structure is not conscious and is incapable of cognition. It blocks access to what we wish to think about and replaces these items with artifacts. In so doing, it replaces spontaneity with rules.

None of this is to deny that thinking identifies, analyzes, or describes structure, or that it produces rules, methods, forms, arguments, and so on in an apparently limitless richness. But that is an entirely different matter from the attempt to construct understanding from the operation of cognitive machines. It is all very well to talk about precise conceptual analysis. But we have to begin with that which is to be analyzed, not with a set of extraneous analytical tools which may or may not fit what is to be analyzed. Furthermore, it is one thing to analyze something with a set of tools, and something else again to replace what is to be analyzed with a construction made up of the tools themselves. Nor can I construct the process of thinking from a collection of anecdotes about conforming to, or approaching, or for that matter constituting, trees, dogs, or persons. If I am going to construct a "model" that purports to explain thinking, the model must itself *conform* to thinking; it begs the question to force thinking to conform to the model.

Shocking as it must sound to Kantians, I believe that the myths and metaphors employed by Plato to describe the process of thinking are more accurate than the quasi-scientific epistemologies of modern philosophy. That is, they are truer to the phenomena because they are not precise, or let us say that their precision is poetic. Kant of course regarded Plato's dialogues as *Schwärmerei*. "Die Philosophie des Aristoteles ist dagegen Arbeit." Perhaps so, but there is also no epistemology in Aristotle. And I defend poetry over epistemology, odd as it may sound, on Kantian grounds, because of the antagonism

between epistemology and spontaneity. We Kantians must never tire of asking ourselves the simple but indispensable question. What do I do when I think? Do I generate trees, dogs, and human beings by operating a series of interconnected machines? Is thinking like Charlie Chaplin caught on the assembly line in *Modern Times*? Do I turn into trees, dogs, and human beings in a series of discontinuous and surrealist episodes, as though I were a peculiarly amorphous being at a costume ball who constantly changes his disguises?

Allow me to repeat the deep truth, made famous by Kant and Wittgenstein but first enunciated by Plato in his dialogue, *Statesman*, that there are no rules for the application of rules. Thinking is spontaneous because it must determine continuously what comes next, what it is to say now, which of its constructions are here applicable, and so on. No model of the mind can tell us what comes next, and so no model can verify itself. But there is no model of thinking, where by thinking is meant the activity of following rules in order to manufacture intellectual commodities. When looking for causal relations or when making perceptual identifications, I must be engaged in an *unruly* activity, one to which no rules apply, because I am in the process of applying rules, or of deciding which rules to apply.

So the question is not simply one of the difference between the "phenomenological" or empirical stream of consciousness on the one hand, and on the other, the scientific or philosophical analysis of the underlying structure of the stream of consciousness. Thinking is in the first place not a stream of consciousness, or not a stream of consciousness alone, but the intelligible and intelligent consideration of everything under the sun. In the second place, the analysis of structure is not the uncovering of the structure of the intelligent consideration of everything under the sun, because considering has no structure. There are no doubt rules, methods, and procedures to facilitate consideration, but these are not the same as the act of considering itself. It is at this point that Kant's doctrine of apperception becomes necessary.

The spontaneity of thought consists in its ability to produce rules, and so to consider the circumstances in which they may

be applicable, and hence when they are irrelevant or superfluous or misapplied. This may also be expressed by saying that we are always in a position to change our minds. If this expression sounds too chaotic to the proponent of rules, I note that it accords with the Aristotelian analysis in the *de Anima,* according to which the intellect, as the "form of forms" or *topos* of forms, cannot have a determinate form itself. One can bring Aristotle into harmony with Kant by saying that the unity of apperception has no more structure than does *nous*.

If the mind, or more specifically the intellect, i.e., thought, had a determinate structure, whether Kantian or of some other variety, then it could never entertain thoughts of entities other than itself. For this reason, the faculties or machinery attributed to thought by Kant and other model-theoreticians cannot be understood as the actual structure of thought, in the sense that the shape of a tree or a dog in fact sets the limit to the essential being and acting of the tree or the dog. The rules may bind in the sphere of their applicability, but the use of the rules is spontaneous. And this means that our thinking about the rules, and so too about which objects are covered by the rules, is spontaneous.

I am not arguing here that it is entirely a question of will or choice on my part as to which objects I shall think or perceive. Sometimes it is, but more often it is not. And the cases in which to think is to produce *objects* are all derivative from, and so dependent upon, cases in which thinking (and perceiving) is the thinking (and perceiving) of beings that I have not produced. My point is not that I produce what I think or perceive; I am only partly a Kantian, as I hope to have made clear. My point is rather that in coming to grips with the elements of the continuum of experience in which I am situated, I neither produce nor identify with these elements. I approach them, or attempt to approach them, and in this way to discover the rules, if any, by which their nature and behavior is determined. But in making this approach, I do not engage in a rule-governed process of switching on engines, applying tools, or following a manual. How I approach the elements of my experience is determined by the nature of the element, or rather by what I apprehend of that nature when

it first attracts my attention. The codifiable procedures of thinking, and so the rules which may be formulated to express the activity of thought within a given domain, are discovered only by reflection upon the activity of thinking about things of a certain kind. They are not discovered by emptying the mind of all specific content other than its own activity and then inspecting that empty activity itself.

Thinking is thus both spontaneous *and* rule-governed. But it could not be rule-governed if it were not spontaneous in the sense just noted, because an inability to detach oneself from, and to reflect upon, rules, is here equivalent to being unconscious or not thinking at all. And this is the explicit contention of those who insist that the mind is a machine. As I employ the term, spontaneity refers to thinking, but not primarily to the production of the object of thought by thinking. Thinking is regulated, not by its inner rules of manufacture, but in the first instance by the purposes for which it thinks and in the second by the natures of what it thinks about. It is true that many objects of thought are produced by thinking. But these objects, if they are anything in particular, themselves have natures that regulate what we think about them. And their possible creation is itself rooted in the actual nature of the beings of everyday experience, from which we deviate or concerning which we improvise, or which we attempt to analyze or explain.

If this is granted, there is no danger of the domination of thinking by the imagination, since the imagination is also held in check by the objects of thought. On the other hand, since thinking is detached from what it thinks about, we are able to explain error and success, as well as reasoning in a sequential or deductive manner; and we are also able to explain why we have no luck in acquiring perfect knowledge about the objects of thought, or in an older idiom, about why we are not wise.

This is because we can never close the gap between thinking and the elements about which we think. This gap, incidentally, is not an abyss. We are often, but not always, free to consider or not to consider beings of such-and-such a kind. But once we decide to consider such beings, we are bound to consider them as they are; otherwise, we are considering something else. It therefore turns out

that the freedom of the will, the passport by which we cross the boundary between one set of rules and another, is restricted by a requirement analogous to that referred to by Pierre Bayle, who said that he changed his religion at the border.

In closing, I want to emphasize a point to which I have just alluded. I have denied that we manufacture what we think about entirely from the process of thinking itself. But I am far from denying that the activity of thinking contributes to or modifies what we think about. It does in fact make sense to talk about perceptions, thoughts, concepts, categories, logical rules, and so on. The experience of thinking itself, and not a transcendental, analytical, or scientific theory, forces us to acknowledge two facts.

First: we are capable of identifying and understanding what we think about in the ordinary or pre-theoretical senses of "identifying" and "understanding." Everyday experience is not a *Gewühl* or a chaos of random and arbitrarily associated sensations. Second: we are often mistaken in our identifications or presumed understanding of this or that element or sector of everyday experience, but we are never entirely mistaken, and the errors we make are corrigible by access to other elements or sectors of everyday experience.

I infer from this undeniable basis that we produce neither the beings nor the process of thought that underlies all subsequent cognitive production, but that we are capable of an initial apprehension of what presents itself which is not sufficient to be called "conformity with" in the sense of either being or knowing perfectly the elements we apprehend, but which is sufficient to license progress and decline. Equally if not more important, we make a sufficient approach to things to engender reasonable activity. All this means that perceptions, concepts, categories, and so on, are not the initial medium of contact with the elements of or candidates for thinking, in the sense of artifacts manufactured by thinking in order to furnish us with, or to place us into contact with, whatever we think.

Thinking is like moderately good vision for which spectacles are required. If thinking were blind, spectacles, however strong, would be useless. But neither can we explain thinking as the *use* of spectacles, nor is it permissible to explain how thinking functions

by applying to it the principles by which we manufactured the spectacles. On the contrary, we manufactured the spectacles by applying the principles of thinking, or in the metaphor, of optics, together with a variety of other kinds of knowledge, all of them consequences of thought, not thought itself.

Notes

1 For the history of this distinction, see J. Alberto Coffa, *The Semantic Tradition From Kant to Carnap: To the Vienna station* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

2 "But we can only understand and communicate to others what we ourselves can *make*." Letter to Beck, July 1, 1794 (11: 514), translated in Kant's *Philosophical Correspondence 1759–1799*, edited and translated by A. Zweig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1967), p. 216. Kant is referring here to synthesis as opposed to intuition. See also Bxiii in the *First Critique*.

3 *De anima* III.8, 431b21 ff. See also III.7, b16: *holos de ho nous estin ho kat'energeian ta pragmata*.

4 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

5 Cf. Bernard Rousset, *La doctrine kantienne de l'objectivité* (Paris: J. Vrin: 1967), p. 409: Autonomy means that "nous construisons l'objectivité du réel par nous seuls, sans appui sur aucune transcendance, ni extérieure, ni intérieure, sans Dieu, ni âme, comme simples consciences humaines."

6 Compare here Beatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, tr. By Charles T. Wolfe (Princeton University Press: 1998), p. 300. On her interpretation, "matter of appearances" corresponds to sensation. The latter is given; the former is "apprehended" via a figurative synthesis.

7 See Vittorio Mathieu, *Kant's opus postumum*, edited by Gerd Held (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann: 1989) for details. Compare Michael Friedman, *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 238: the *Opus postumum* is designed to supply *a priori* foundations to the forces of empirical physics.

8 Among the various discussions of this point, I mention Gerold Prauss, *Erscheinung bei Kant* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971); Hansgeorg Hoppe, *Synthesis bei Kant* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1983) and Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). Allison (pp. 72 f.) follows Prauss's suggestion with respect to the impossibility of equating objective judgment with truth, since then every judgment of perception would be true. Prauss suggests that objective validity for Kant means simply the capacity to be true or false. But this capacity depends upon the determinateness of the perceptual judgment as possibly true or false of this particular object. Otherwise put, Prauss's solution falls prey to the criticism by Hoppe, which can be summarized as follows: private

perceptual judgments are objectively determined prior to the functioning of the unity of apperception. A private perception is of some definite object; it is not a *Gewühl* (A111) of random sensations (Hoppe, pp. 109, 149). In other words, we do think of objects by association alone. The form must already be present, actually or *in potentia*, in order for the content of a private perception to refer to some particular object. If it does not so refer, then there is no private perceptual judgment at all. A further difficulty is that categories cannot be determinate concepts; that is, they cannot account for the perceived form of the object. In sum, Kant has not explained the pre-categorial or conceptual shape of associated perceptions. And he explains error as the subsumption of an object under the wrong concept, without explaining how we can identify the object we are subsuming, rightly or wrongly, as a particular object. If the private perception is pre- or non-objective, then it becomes so via subsumption, in which case the judgment is always correct. But if the perception is pre-objective, this gives rise to an infinite regress. And neither the category nor the schema can explain the perceived form of the particular object, e.g., a dog as distinct from all other four-legged animals (See B180). As a coda, I note that it is curiously Aristotelian to speak of sensation as possessing forms *in potentia*.

9 Cited from the *Prolegomena*, par. 19, in Beatrice Longuenesse, *op. cit.*, p. 194, note 47.

10 Allison, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4.

11 *Logische Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968), II/I, p. 168.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Contributions to Contributions: Remarks on Heidegger's Beiträge

On more than one occasion during my visits to Germany in the Seventies and Eighties, I was taken aside by an old student of Heidegger's and informed *sotto voce* that books like *Being and Time* and the *Nietzsche* lectures were Heidegger's exoteric writings.[1] Allusions were made to a mysterious manuscript that was available only to the inner circle of disciples, and which contained the esoteric doctrines of the master. On one such occasion, I was invited after dinner into the study of my host, who after swearing me to secrecy, unlocked a drawer in his desk and allowed me to look quickly through a typewritten transcript of the sacred text. This was my introduction to the work to be published in 1989 and entitled *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, "Contributions to Philosophy."[2]

Now that the cat is out of the bag, I am released from my oath of secrecy, and I propose this morning to spend twenty-five minutes or so in ruminations which I have entitled "Contributions to *Contributions*." So far as I know, the *Beiträge* have not been considered from a political standpoint. Indeed, they have not, I believe, been subjected to extensive analysis of any sort. In part this is certainly because the manuscript is eccentric even by Heideggerian standards, and could easily be regarded as self-indulgent, undisciplined, sentimental, and a work of philosophical *Kitsch*. But it is a mistake to ignore this "text," as they say in Paris, since it is taken very seriously by Heidegger as well as by his closest students. It is also the most fully worked out statement of themes that are cryptically expressed in the publications stemming from the mid-thirties and thereafter. My intention, then, is to ask what are the implications of this manuscript for political philosophy, and so too for political life.

The tentativeness of my title, and the description of my remarks as ruminations, are intended as a response to the spirit that hovers over the pages of the *Beiträge* and to the author's warning that this is not a work in the usual style. Stated with introductory simplicity, it is not a system or a set of positive doctrines and certainly not the solution of a problem or the development of a method for solving philosophical puzzles. Heidegger is attempting to describe a transition from one epoch of Being to another, and so from one sense of truth to another. Let me quickly state the main point in very simple terms for the benefit of those who are not adepts in Heideggerian philosophy. Heidegger speaks as a prophet of a new orientation to Being and truth that is derived or that *occurs* from the event or process of Being itself, and hence that overcomes the subject-object distinction or the orientation in terms of things or determinate beings as they look to human cognition. Being as event (*Ereignis*) is of course not the Parmenidean being, the Platonic *idea* or the Aristotelian being *qua* being, but the emergence-process from which beings originate, and which thus conceals itself precisely in the process of manifesting itself via this or that being or concrete event.

I would myself describe this conception of Being as a radical revision of Hegel's understanding of the absolute as pulsation. Heidegger of course repudiates all applications of "logic" to the truth of Being, and in particular Hegel's logic (460 ff.); there is for Heidegger no logical description of the structure of the pulsation process but instead a thinking that is itself a pulsating, and indeed, the very pulsating of the truth of Being. Heidegger never manages to explain in any direct way what that truth is, since he rejects all predicative statements or attributions of properties as reifications or as ontic, that is, as attempts to reduce Being to the status of a being or structure of beings. One should consult here the list of ostensibly non-ontic properties attributed to Being on pages 470 ff., such as "event" or "occurrence," simplicity, uniqueness, and loneliness, among others, or his endlessly repeated characterization of Being as withdrawal, refusal, manifestation as self-hiddenness, and so on. This point is closely related to the question whether

the previously mentioned overcoming of the traditional, Platonist, or metaphysical way of looking at and describing things is a destruction or a "deconstruction," that is, a reshaping or freeing up of our view of things, which latter are not rejected but properly apprehended from within the truth of Being (see 183). Since we cannot really say what the truth of Being is, as Heidegger emphasizes over and over in the *Beiträge*, the claim that the destruction is a "purification of the metaphysical foundations" (221) is not satisfactory. Heidegger repeatedly stresses that ours is an age of transition; this is what it means to speak of the shift from the first to the other beginning. In fact, transition is too weak a term; "our hour is the time of ruin" or going under ("Unsere Stunde ist das Zeitalter des Untergangs": 397). Heidegger is interested neither in going back to the Greeks nor in preserving or continuing the modern epoch. He describes "the modern" as "the concealed and self-ignorant enemy of everything that is decisive" (434), that is to say, of the decision to prepare the way for the manifestation of Being as event, and hence of the totally other beginning of human "happening" (*Geschichte* as opposed to thing-oriented *Historie*). By "totally other," of course, he means other than the Greek beginning, and in particular, its canonical formulation by Plato and Aristotle.

One finds in Heidegger's critique of the Western thing-oriented tradition a number of points that are made by various Nineteenth Century writers including Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Dilthey, and Nietzsche. I refer to the intensified emphasis upon formation as opposed to static form, the historicity of truth, alienation and anxiety in the face of nothingness and the loss of religious and philosophical tradition, a denunciation of the reification of the soul instituted by modern science, the steady vulgarisation of culture, the brutality of planning and the massification of life by the application of mathematical rationalism to all human activities, to mention a few of the most important. Heidegger adapts some of these points in his own thinking, others he reiterates as charges leveled against the modern epoch. The focus of Heidegger's destructive analysis is the unleashing in the modern epoch of the will to power, of which the most important consequence is the forgetting or concealment of Being.

It may be helpful to think of Heidegger's interpretation of the history of philosophy as the attempt to dissolve the artifacts of the will that have been produced by the human effort to put Being to its own uses, an effort that has led us to neglect Being from the outset, and then to forget that we have neglected it.

The aforementioned points may be found in the texts of Heideggerians of all political standpoints, but they are especially typical of what I will call the disciples of the old school. This is obvious in the case of the denunciation of the forgetting of Being. There is a connection between Heideggerian versions of ontology (or of the post-ontological thinking of Being) and political and cultural conservatism. By this expression I do not refer to the National Socialists but to the views that typified well-educated and talented individuals of Old Europe. The cultural component of these views was not the exclusive property of political conservatives; this component could be found, for example, in Herbert Marcuse, a student of Heidegger's who moved to the political left, or in Horkheimer and Adorno, who detested Heidegger. In brief, old-school Heideggerianism does not see a conflict between the acceptance of traditional western values of *Bildung* and political conservatism on the one hand, and the deconstruction of Western nihilism together with the repudiation of traditional thing-oriented ontology on the other. But this means that there is an internal tension within old-school Heideggerianism between the radically revolutionary doctrine of Being, with the destruction of the entire tradition, and the acceptance of a traditional political and cultural conservatism.

The left-Heideggerians, many if not all of whom are also left-Nietzscheans, are more consequent, that is to say, more fanatical in their views than their counterparts on the right. They assert a panoply of liberationist programs in reacting against the will to power, reification, domination, and nihilism intrinsic to Western civilization. I believe this is because they are no longer interested in the problematic of Being, which is itself too reificationist or foundationalist for their obsession with difference. This exaggeration of difference amounts to the replacement of Being as event in

favor of Becoming as spontaneity. Nor is this contradicted even by those left-Heideggerians who continue to speak of presencing and event as the legitimation process of anarchism and a celebration of "what's happening," in the jargon of a more innocent subform of the postmodern ethos.

I want now to make two points that are of special interest to students of political philosophy. The first is that it is, or should be, immediately obvious that the attempt to read Heidegger as a Christian thinker, despite its popularity, cannot be sustained without a radical reinterpretation of orthodox Christian doctrine along Schellingian lines. "The truth of Being (*Seyn*)...is not perhaps due to the Gods at some given moment [i.e., they did not create it *ex nihilo*] but pertains only to the abyss of that dispensation (*Fügung*) which the Gods themselves endorse" (6–7; cf. 379 on the *Abgrund*). The most that could be said of this enigmatic passage is that the Gods and Being are coexistent, and that the Gods "endorse" the dispensation that emerges from the abyss of Being.

For the Christian, God creates and so precedes Being. For Heidegger, Being may be said to create the Gods (note the plural) in the sense that it is the dispensation of Being that determines which God we are to worship in any given epoch of the history of Being. To this I add that the questioning that marks the other beginning is also a waiting, not for Godot but for "the last God." Heidegger is a polytheist, although he insists that the plural "Gods" refers not to their number but to the as yet undecided question of their Being (411, 437). The last god is last in the sense that with his coming, the decision about the Gods is finally made (406). To say this in slightly different terms, the coming of the last God is dependent upon the manifestation of the other beginning, that is, the deeper, more originative sense of the truth of Being; it cannot be prepared by any current religions or cults, and certainly not by traditional theology, which is both *logos*- and thing-oriented (416).

If the longing for a God is the mark of religion, then there can be no doubt that Heidegger is religious. But he is certainly not a Christian (see the disparaging remark about Christianity and *Weltanschauung* on 25). His God is not the giver of the ten

commandments or of the commandment to replace the positive law with love. The last God has an entirely indeterminate if somehow fundamental relation to mankind, which Heidegger regularly describes as mediated by the "in-betweenness of Being" (476). This relation is the expression of the possibilities available to us in the *Geschichte* or "happening" of the other beginning (27). But the possibilities are themselves described entirely in terms of the thinking of the truth of Being. "In the essencing (*Wesung*) of the truth of Being, *in* the event and *as* event, the last God hides himself" (24). This comes dangerously close to describing the last God as an emanation of the pulsation-process of Being, although I add that such is not Heidegger's usual view.

I must turn now to my second point, which is in a way implied in this sketch of the last God. Strictly speaking, there is no political philosophy in Heidegger, and certainly there is none of any sort in the *Beiträge*. There is prophecy, in the manner of Hölderlin, whom Heidegger regularly and almost unreservedly endorses, but there is no doctrine. How could there be, when, as Heidegger emphasizes, "we" (in other words, he and his disciples) "can only prepare the way for the seeking of the poet (*Dichter*) who will found Being" (in the new or other sense: 11). The entire prophetic exercise is saturated with reserve, silence, attending to, looking for what is revealed only as hidden, and so on (in this connection, see the very last paragraph of the work on 510).

The prophetic anticipation of the other beginning is devoid of moral or political significance. We are now in a transitional period which may be described as nihilism. The task of the prophet, or of the prophesier of the poet who will found the new epoch, is not to engage in politics but to separate himself and his very few disciples (28) from the unsympathetic and even hostile many, in order to prepare the elite for the arrival of the event that is itself the granting of the other beginning or new epoch. This means that the *Beiträge*, and indeed, Heidegger's writings of this and subsequent decades, have no immediate political implications of any kind, unless one regards a withdrawn attendance upon the epiphany of Being as itself a politically significant quietism or resignation to what occurs.

Heidegger is explicit on this pivotal issue. The entering into or being grasped by the play of spatio-temporality peculiar to the new sense of Being moves us to think through the decision about Being; "it no longer deals with good and evil, with the fall and salvation of the tradition, with good nature and violence; it only sees and grasps what is..." (242 f). As to *Being and Time*, the first attempt to initiate the other beginning, and a book from which many have attempted to derive a political doctrine, Heidegger says that "it is no 'ideal' and no 'program' but the self-preparing beginning of the essencing of Being itself, not what we think but what...constrains us into a thinking that neither grants a teaching nor induces a 'moral' activity nor secures 'existence,' but rather 'merely' grounds truth as the play of time and space within which the existent (*das Seiende*) can once more exist, that is, once more contribute to the custody (*Verwahrung*) of Being" (243; for other statements of the same point, see 87, 95, 103, and 486).

Like many another prophet, Heidegger is entirely silent on the shape and texture of political or human life generally as it will exhibit itself in the other beginning. It is therefore possible to infer a kind of activist anarchism from this period of Heidegger's thought, as was done most elaborately by the late Reiner Schürmann. It is worth quoting Schürmann on this crucial point. There is for Schürmann's Heidegger no normative discourse at the end of modernity. "We *think* by 'complying' with the economic mutations of presencing. We *act* in the same way" (78). "Economic" is Schürmann's analogue to Foucault's *epistēmē*. It is the event and the "systemic constellation" of the event of a given epoch of Being. Schürmann then concludes: "To the question 'What ought we to do?' the answer is, then, the same as to the question 'How ought we to think?' Love the flux and thank its economic confluences" (81). As a left-Heideggerian, Schürmann replaces decisionism with love. The resulting ethos is therefore altogether more "laid-back" than is the Heideggerian stance of preparing for the opening of the space within which the question of the other beginning may at last be posed. The Heideggerian is tense with the need to restrain himself, not to anticipate, not to see too quickly, not to attempt to reveal what prefers the discretion of a veil,

and so to practice what a Greek might call *sōphrosunē*. Schürmann, on the contrary, is a partisan of Eros.

One could counter Schürmann's anarchism from a hypothetical right-wing standpoint by urging that Heidegger wishes us to address ourselves to beings, and hence also to take responsible political and moral stances, but that these addressings and those stances are all to be oriented to the Being of the other beginning rather than to the traditional Being of beings. I am not sure that I know what this comes to in political terms, but the edifying tone makes me a bit suspicious when it is combined with the language of decisions, dispensations, attending to the presencing of Being, and the rest. Is this not an acceptance of the dispensation of history, or resignation to the existing political situation? If not, why not? How does the thinking of the truth of Being dispose us to a new rank-ordering or conception of justice and virtue? Would Heidegger not reject this terminology as anthropological and indicative of the old desire to dominate Being rather than to let it be? Could one not say without fear of contradiction that one has heard the voice of Being as a silent endorsement of any political ideology whatsoever?

Let these questions serve as an expression of the deeply problematic character of the thinking of the *Beiträge* with respect to the destiny of the human race. The shift from the first to the other beginning is not effected via moral commands or by the assigning of moral responsibilities (98). This change is not moral or even anthropological but *Seinsgeschichtlich* (103). Heidegger means by this that the primary task is the questioning of the truth of Being, a truth from which human being originates and from which we derive our truth as well as our humanity. In no sense could one call this a political act of revolution. Heidegger is neither political nor anti-political.

And yet, he does say something of political importance. In particular, we may infer from his criticism of the first beginning that the other beginning will reverse it, or carry through the "deconstruction" (*Abbau* or *Destruktion*) of the subjectivism, perspectivism, technicism, vulgarisation, and will to power that characterize it.

Furthermore, there will be a very radical transformation of language in the other beginning, although not one that is easy to describe. I will illustrate this point with reference to his obsession with the act of decision, an obsession that reminds us of Carl Schmitt, also today much discussed by political theorists.

Heidegger's decision is not about politics but the event or occurrence of Being. Since this event is not one of the presencing or coming into view of determinate beings, it cannot be described in the usual predicational or propositional language that is appropriate to things. "We can never say [i.e., bespeak] Being itself directly. For every saying emerges out of Being and speaks out of its truth" (79). But we are forced to use the language of beings, since language is by its nature attuned to things or beings. What then are we to do? We must undergo a transformation of linguistic meaning which Heidegger explains only through an example. "For example, 'decision' (*Entscheidung*) can and ought at first to be meant as human 'act,' if not morally, nevertheless with respect to effectivity, until suddenly it means the essence of Being itself, which does not mean that now Being is interpreted 'anthropologically,' but the reverse, that man has been returned into the essence of Being and snatched away from the chains of 'anthropology'" (78, 84).

I am forced to conclude from passages like this that there is no easy way in which to refute Schürmann's anarchistic interpretation of Heidegger. And yet I do not wish to endorse the thesis that Heidegger was an anarchist. Perhaps we can avoid this identification by distinguishing between a foundationalist and an anti-foundationalist ontology. The issue turns on the distinction between origination as event on the one hand, and spontaneity or sheer difference on the other. Heidegger is not an anti-foundationalist but he is very close to Hegel, despite his repudiation of the subject-object structure and the primacy of logic, as well as his preference for Schelling.

At the beginning of this talk, I suggested that Heidegger's sense of Being as event is like Hegel's conception of actuality as a "pulsebeat" or pure process of formation. The Heideggerian analogue to

Hegel's dialectico-speculative logic is "saying" or "bespeaking." I quote: "This saying collects Being to a first reminiscence (*Anklang*) of its essence and resounds (*erklingt*) itself only out of this essence" (3–4). In plain English, Being is the foundation, despite the regular association of the ground with an *Abgrund* or abyss. We are to orient ourselves in terms of the commemorative thinking that is itself a collecting or gathering of and by Being. This is not the same as the Biblical religion, but it certainly implies a respect for creation and the attempt to give full dignity to the productions or revelations of Being. Heidegger's radical temporalization of the Being-process is thus not to be confused with French doctrines of the emancipation of difference. Schürmann is a French Heideggerian, and hence not a Heideggerian at all. But the shift to French Heideggerianism is not totally unwarranted. It can be justified by the very vagueness, even emptiness, of the doctrine of Being and so of the lack of direction with respect to the events of the other beginning.

My conclusion is thus as follows. Heidegger proposes to ground politics and morality in the authentic decision to interrogate Being, which in turn allows each event of the Being-process to present itself in its genuine nature, namely, as seen from the standpoint of the Being that originates it. Such an orientation will prevent the imposition of subjective human standpoints; it will prevent human self-aggrandisement or the will to power, with the consequent reification of other humans as well as the rest of the beings through which we hope to dominate the totality of history. The weakness of this proposal is obvious. The occurrence or origination process is lacking in human significance. It does not, simply as a process, produce a rank-ordering or a distinction between nobility and baseness. On the contrary, it turns our attention away from these distinctions and renders us isolated acolytes of a quasi-religious posturing that smacks of self-righteousness while lacking any criterion of right and wrong. The merit of the proposal is not quite what Heideggerians would like. It calls our attention to the defects intrinsic in the modern epoch and raises the need to reconsider the classical, in particular the Platonist, conception of the connection between thinking and goodness.

Notes

1 This paper was delivered at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, August 1997; Washington, D.C. [ed.].

2 *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989).

CHAPTER NINE

Freedom and Reason

I

I am pleased and honored to be invited to deliver the Companys lectures for 1992.[1] In keeping with the terms of the invitation, I want to discuss today a problem that is fundamental to the question of human society. The relation between freedom and reason is implicit in European thought from the time of the ancient Greeks, as is perhaps most obvious from two of Aristotle's definitions of the human being, namely, as the animal who possesses reason and as the political animal. I remind you that Aristotle also defines man as the imitative animal and as the featherless biped.

These definitions give rise to an extremely important inference: The ancients in general, and Aristotle in particular, understood very well the fact, usually associated with late modern thought, that human being is divided within itself, or, to employ a Hegelian expression that will reappear later in my talk, that man is a disrupted harmony. There is another consequence of Aristotle's definitions, also of central significance for the theme of this lecture. One could say that Aristotle gives a theoretical and a practical definition of human nature in senses that would be immediately accepted by many if not all contemporary philosophers. But the same is not true of his productive definition of man as the imitative animal. Imitation is the copying of that which already exists, just as purgation of emotions brings the theatergoer back into harmony with the existing circumstances of life. These points are summarized in Aristotle's observation that art completes nature. But art does not make or replace nature.

It has been argued that the Socratic school in general minimizes the importance of *technē* or *poiēsis*, i.e., of making, in the understanding of human being. In my opinion, this argument applies to Aristotle but is mistaken when applied to Plato. By this I do not

mean to accept Heidegger's contention that Plato's doctrine of Being and the Ideas was influenced by the paradigm of production. My point applies to human activity, not to Being. The key here is that Plato never defines man as by nature the political animal, nor does he distinguish between practice and production, as does his student Aristotle. Whatever may have been the influence of Plato's ostensible mathematicism on early modernity, there is also a deep connection between his conception of practico-production and modern constructivism.

Aristotle's separation of theory from practice is based upon his distinction of production from practice. He is well aware of the fact that technical progress is externally unlimited, but he subordinates technical production to natural ends of theory and practice. This subordination applies to poetry as a branch of technical production. The situation in Plato is superficially similar but intrinsically quite different. Whereas poetry is subordinated to politics in Plato's *Republic*, politics, here as elsewhere in the dialogues, is poetical. Again I limit myself to the crucial point. In Aristotle, the ends of theory and practice can be achieved; wisdom is possible or, as Aristotle puts it, the gods are not jealous of human wisdom. In Plato, on the contrary, the Ideas, the natural *telos* of the philosophical Eros, are not accessible, except intermittently, via recollection, or through representation in images.

In Plato, the Ideas provide something like what Kant calls "regulative Ideals" for human conduct. But the unbridgeable gap between reason and the Ideas leaves room for productive activity: the statesman is like the weaver who fashions a cloak to protect the human being from the rigors of the natural environment. From this standpoint, Plato is much closer to the modern epoch than Aristotle, although he differs fundamentally from the great modern innovators in distinguishing between the Ideas and the erotic activity by which human beings aspire to the vision of those Ideas.

I can also express my meaning by saying that there is something deeply Platonic about the ostensibly anti-Platonist dimension of modern, and perhaps even more decisively of postmodern doctrines of production. Modern philosophy tends to assimilate both

theory and practice into production. This is normally undertaken in the name of freedom, at first in the name of the relation between freedom and reason, but eventually in a repudiation of reason for the sake of freedom. It is almost as if Plato's erotic madness triumphs over his science of pure Ideas. The most extreme form of this triumph is Heidegger's doctrine of Being as what I would venture to call erotic auto-production.

This brings me to the central thesis of my lecture: the modern conception of the relation between freedom and reason is derived from two incompatible components: reason is defined as the instrument of freedom, but as an instrument that becomes the greatest obstacle to freedom. Underlying this incompatibility is the gradual assimilation within the historical unconscious of modern philosophy, of the Platonic Ideas or Aristotelian ends into an Eros that has been transformed into neurophysiological desire.

In my book on *Nihilism*, published in 1969,[2] I expressed the main point as the unsatisfactory nature of the early modern adoption of mathematics as the dominant paradigm of reason. I still believe that this points us in the right direction. Mathematics is without doubt the most important element in the early modern conception of reason as the instrument of the will to freedom. But this paradigm makes it impossible to offer a rational interpretation or defense of reason or of freedom. When this came to be understood, the response, beginning already with thinkers like Herder and Rousseau and coming to a climax with Dilthey and Nietzsche, was disastrous; namely, to supplement mathematics with history.

The turn to history is fundamentally the attempt to find human significance in practico-production, given its absence from mathematical structure. The moving force of practico-production is desire. In the central part of my lecture I want to discuss the essential steps in the modern attempt to free mankind from the ostensible restrictions of classical philosophy. These steps, taken to assure the connection between freedom and reason, served instead to introduce the spectre of the subordination of reason to madness and freedom to chaos. I shall in other words present evidence to show that modernity, which comes more and more to regard itself

as anti-Platonism, is in fact a "reversed" Platonism rooted in the transformation of Eros, through which is dissolved the distinction between desire and the objects of desire.

In a single lecture, it seems wise to restrict myself to the beginning and the end of the historical process that has culminated in the contemporary crisis of freedom and reason. I will therefore discuss Descartes as the crucial stage in the subterranean transformation of the Platonic doctrine of Eros, and then offer some remarks about the concealed presence of Eros in Hegel. In order to set the scene for this part of my lecture, I need to make one or two additional remarks about Plato.

If one begins from the so-called Platonic Ideas, there is no way to arrive at the human soul, or more generally at human existence, and hence at philosophy as the genuinely free human activity. If however one begins with the doctrine of Eros, and hence with the philosophical activity of the human soul, one may arrive at the Platonic Ideas. The fundamental philosophical problem is precisely that of the relation between Eros and the Ideas. This is why I have suggested that modern philosophy can be understood as the process by which the Ideas are transformed into manifestations or productions of Eros rather than preserved as external objects of erotic desire.

The corollary to this transformation of the Ideas is the secularization of Eros from its divine or daimonic status in Plato to its modern status of physiological passion. In the Platonic teaching, we distinguish between the desires of the body, of which the sexual Eros is paramount, and the erotic desire of the soul. The distinction between corporeal and spiritual Eros is not a sharp one and can lead to great ambiguities. To give only the decisive example, Eros is in the *Republic* both the most pleasant and hence the most dangerous of the corporeal desires, closely associated with democracy and tyranny, but also the desire of the highest part of the soul for truth and perfect being.[3]

In its lower or pandemic form, Eros emerges from within the depths of the incarnate soul; let us refer to this Eros as the principle of physiological desire. The demotic desire for freedom is nothing other than the tyranny of the physiological desires, which Socrates

epitomizes as *eros turannos*,[4] and tyranny is the consequence of the exaggerated desire for freedom, which he identifies as the desire for pleasure, that characterizes the democratic soul. Since the physiological Eros is the greatest evil, it would seem that moderation (*sōphrosunē*) is the greatest human good, and in fact, Socrates' account of justice as minding one's own business is essentially an application of the principle of moderation.

But we must distinguish between the moderation of demotic virtue[5] and that which characterizes the philosophical virtue. Philosophical virtue is the purification of demotic vice, namely, a genuine Eros for true philosophy with which we have been inspired by some god.[6] As I am about to indicate, this purification of demotic vice is also a transcendence of demotic virtue.

In the more elaborately metaphorical language of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, the philosophical Eros is a daimon or a god who comes to us from above, that is, from outside the incarnate soul of the neurophysiological individual. If we combine the political formulation of the *Republic* with the private formulations of the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, Socrates teaches us that vulgar or demotic freedom is a vice, and that virtue is moderation, but that philosophical moderation is paradoxically equivalent to the erotic madness that comes from above, and so that detaches us from political life together with its intrinsically immoderate desire for freedom. Genuine or philosophical freedom is submission of the lower parts of the soul to the intellect or reason, which in turn subordinates itself to the pure Ideas. This is why the Eleatic Stranger refers to dialectic in the *Sophist* as the science of the free man.[7]

Let me now summarize these remarks about Plato. In the Platonic dialogues, political freedom in the conventional sense of the term is criticized as being in principle a derivation of the pandemic or neurophysiological Eros, and hence as irrational. Genuine political freedom is equivalent to rule by philosophers who, thanks to the divine Eros, are themselves dominated by the vision of the pure forms or Ideas. The connection between freedom and reason is thus "theoretical" in the literal sense that the soul is defined, and therefore limited, by this vision of formal structure and cosmic order.

Theory, however, is not "value-free" in the modern sense because the Ideas are illuminated by goodness and beauty. At the same time, the gap between intellectual perception and the Ideas leaves room for human productivity, and thus requires an accommodation of the divine madness to the sobriety of demotic or everyday virtue.

II

I turn now to Descartes, who is for us paradigmatic of the modern attempt to free mankind from bondage to God and to nature, or who, in a somewhat more cautious formulation, by encouraging us to be as the masters and possessors of nature, initiates the process of overcoming the separation between the human and the divine, a process that culminates in Hegel. What Descartes means by mastery is of course quite different from what Hegel means when he tells us that he has thought in his *Logic* the eternal essence of God as it is prior to the creation of the universe.[8]

In what follows, I restrict myself primarily to the theme of the transformation of Eros, the essential point in the career of the passions within the modern epoch. The text to be discussed is the *Passions of the Soul*. In this treatise, Descartes offers a new analysis, not simply of the passions, but of human nature altogether.[9] The analysis begins with an explicit rejection of the account given by the Ancients. Descartes asserts that the investigation of human nature is not especially difficult, because each of us feels the passions within himself: "one has no need to borrow from elsewhere any observation in order to discover their nature."[10] We may infer from Descartes's own procedure that the Ancients were prevented from taking so simple a step by their distinction between divine desire and human or physiological passion. As one could also state this, poetry had not yet been replaced by physics, or madness by sobriety.

In the decisive case of Eros, the point is entirely clear. In the *Symposium* (to which Descartes explicitly refers),[11] Diotima makes Eros a daimonic intermediary between mortal and immortal who practices the hermeneutic art of interpreting human needs and divine commands, thereby binding the cosmos into a whole.[12] Descartes so to speak secularizes Eros by making love (*Amour*) one of the five

basic or physiological passions, all of which are subordinated, not to external forms, not even to geometrical forms or mathematical ratios, but to another faculty of the soul itself, which Descartes calls *generosité* and also *magnanimité* or what the Greeks called *megalopsuchia*, "greatness of soul."[13] It would not be misleading to say that Descartes subordinates Eros to spiritedness (*thumos*), the faculty that for Socrates defines the warrior. This is quite understandable, in view of the Cartesian campaign to master nature, which necessarily entails the overthrow of its previous ruler.

The function of *generosité* is to prevent us from desiring passionately what does not depend solely upon ourselves. One may perhaps discern here the defensive function of *thumos*, but there is a great difference between *generosité* and Eros, or the passionate desire for that which is other than ourselves, and in the crucial case of the Ideas, entirely beyond us. *Generosité* is obviously a principle of freedom in the sense of independence. As a further step toward this independence, Descartes recommends that we reflect upon the identity between divine providence and necessity on the one hand, and on the other, between fortune and ignorance. The link between freedom and reason, or more specifically, between independence and knowledge, is evident.

To the extent that knowledge is of natural order, Descartes remains a Platonist in his conception of freedom. But this adherence to Platonism is quite misleading, as I am about to indicate. According to Descartes, mathematical science, and in particular, physics, is capable of acquiring a precise knowledge of necessity, and not of the necessity of a nature that is independent of the human will. This point could be demonstrated by reviewing Descartes's replacement of knowledge of essences by knowledge of mathematical constructions. In today's lecture, however, I want to approach the point by way of Descartes's analysis of the passions.

Looked at from this angle, Descartes anticipates Hegel by assuring us that what depends upon us alone will provide "a complete satisfaction" ("une entière satisfaction"; cf. the Hegelian *Befriedigung*).[14] Descartes means by this not simply knowledge of nature, but more specifically, self-knowledge, namely, a knowledge

that leads to control of the passions. He claims that no soul is too weak to acquire "an absolute power over the passions," and hence over the desires that move us to act, provided that our soul "is well-guided."[15] This guidance comes from knowledge of both good and evil as well as of the truth, which is then employed by the will to make correct resolutions.[16]

Contrary to Plato, Descartes believes that we can replace myths with *logoi* or knowledge of nature, as well as of good and evil, and hence that we can act securely on the basis of this knowledge. There are Platonic and even Stoic elements in the Cartesian teaching, but these are entirely assimilated into a doctrine of scientific enlightenment. Descartes transforms the Platonic unity of practice and production into the rhetoric of the new mathematical physics, which is now subordinated to the will. The will is free and need never be restrained, whether by passions or (except indirectly) by the motions of the body.[17] On the contrary, the will may change the passions by employing persuasive reasoning;[18] as a consequence, it can regulate corporeal motions.[19]

Descartes also anticipates the Kantian doctrine of the self-esteem of the rational and autonomous person. He tells us that the sole legitimate cause of our self-esteem (the importance of which is taken for granted) is "the use of our free will, and the rule that we have over our volitions...this makes us in a certain way similar to God, by making us masters of ourselves."[20] Self-mastery is the essential presupposition for the mastery and possession of nature. Freedom, mastery, independence: these are the first principles or highest ends in the Cartesian teaching, in the service of which reason is an instrument. Knowledge is instrumental to freedom.[21]

We may represent the difference between Plato and Descartes on this pivotal point by considering their different treatment of admiration or wonder. For Descartes, admiration is "a sudden surprise of the soul" arising from the consideration of "objects that seem to it to be rare and extraordinary."[22] Admiration is useful because it makes us "apprehend and remember things which we previously ignored."[23] But often it happens that we admire too much, and so lapse into wonder (*Estonnement*), which deranges the reason. "It is

good to be born with a certain inclination to this passion, because it disposes us to the acquisition of the sciences; but we ought always to try afterwards to get rid of it as soon as possible." The only way in which to do this is by acquiring knowledge of many things.[24]

According to Socrates in the *Theaetetus*,[25] wonder (*thauma*) is the origin of philosophy. Aristotle makes the same point in the *Metaphysics*,[26] but as I mentioned earlier, for Socrates, wisdom is inaccessible to human beings; hence wonder is continuous with philosophy. For Aristotle, wisdom or first philosophy is not only accessible but he himself possesses it. Contrary to what one could call the "romantic" interpretation of wonder, Plato and Aristotle both attribute the origin of philosophy to wonder at the natural phenomena, and in particular, to the regular motions of the heavens. Descartes is at the least sympathetic to this, but he in effect equates wisdom with the practical consequences of the *mathesis universalis* of which the highest example is mathematical physics. Neither the Platonic philosophy nor the Aristotelian wisdom is in the first instance mathematical physics, a science they would both regard as impossible.

Wonder is for Descartes the temporary sign of the advent of freedom through mathematical physics, and so it is a kind of prophecy of the coming "deconstruction" of philosophy by science. A similar conclusion follows from Descartes's treatment of love. "Love is an emotion of the soul, caused by the movement of the spirits, which incites the soul to join itself voluntarily to those objects which appear suitable [*convenable*] to it."[27] Descartes then notes a common distinction between two kinds of love. These are (1) benevolence, "which incites us to want [*vouloir*] something good for that which we love, and (2) concupiscence, "which makes us desire that which we love."[28] This distinction applies to the effects of love but not to its essence. Descartes says that this is because benevolence follows immediately upon union with the object of desire, and conversely, we desire to possess whatever we regard as a good.

The distinction between benevolence and concupiscence is a secular version of the Platonic distinction between heavenly and pandemic Eros, and it carries the same ambiguity with respect to the common root. In Descartes, however, the ambiguity is

transferred from love to its effects; love is itself defined uniformly as a movement toward union with the suitable or useful. Madness is thus replaced by a mixture of psychic and corporeal motions that are regulated by self-interest or sober calculation. The calculation is again of two kinds: (1) with respect to the good and the bad, as represented by inner sense or reason, and (2) with respect to the beautiful and the ugly, as represented by our external senses. The good is that which is *convenable*, i.e., suitable or useful to our nature. The beautiful is that of which we approve because it gives pleasure (*agréement*). Finally, Descartes distinguishes both these species of love from desire, "to which one often attributes the name of love."[29]

The Cartesian analysis of love thus turns out to be unclear and indistinct. Love is both a generic and a specific name; there is love of the good, love of the beautiful, and desire, by which Descartes presumably refers to concupiscence or sexual love. There is also a generic term "desire" which Descartes defines as "an agitation of the soul, caused by the spirits, which disposes it to want for the future those things that it represents to itself to be suitable" (*convenables*).[30] It thus turns out that the only definition of sexual love is one that subsumes it under love of the good, namely, of the suitable or useful, either in itself or with respect to its effects. Again we see that madness is entirely replaced by self-interest, of which the corollary is self-esteem. It comes as no surprise when Descartes concludes that "the enjoyment of that of which we approve" [*de ce qui agrée*] "is the greatest of all goods that appertain to man."[31] In sum: sexual pleasure gives way to convenience, which is in turn understood as the highest good of self-esteem as guaranteed by independence. The Cartesian sage transcends himself neither via the body nor via the soul.

Descartes does, however, say that love of children and friends can lead us to sacrifice ourselves; he is silent about wives or husbands. We can therefore love others more than we love ourselves.[32] The justification for this self-sacrifice is that it is made on behalf of the better part of the whole to which one belongs. I take this to mean that such a sacrifice is actually an instance of self-esteem and an

exercise of the independent or free will. We may regard it as the limit case of *generosité* or magnanimity. This interpretation is supported by Descartes's assertion that love is caused by knowledge of the goods that we possess,[33] and is for this reason itself an extreme good, "inasmuch as, by joining true goods to ourselves, it perfects us in the same proportion."[34]

Love is thus for Descartes no different from self-love, namely, a strong attachment to things that perfect us. And self-perfection is the achievement of a godlike independence: "the good that has been done by ourselves gives us an interior satisfaction, which is the sweetest of all the passions."[35] Even more explicitly, Descartes says: "it is certain that, provided that our soul always has something to content it in its interior," it cannot be damaged by external troubles, which in fact "augment its joy because, seeing that it cannot be injured by them, this makes it understand its perfection."[36]

Self-sacrifice is then not incompatible with *generosité*, but it is unnecessary for the strongest souls: "For those in whom the will is by nature able most easily to master the passions and to arrest the accompanying movements of the body, are without doubt the strongest souls."[37] This mastery, which arises from knowledge, is coeval with the suppression of wonder and Eros, or more generally, of love.

To conclude our analysis of Descartes, the Platonic Eros is transformed into the enjoyment of independence based upon magnanimity and free will. The passions are controlled by a prudential regulation of spiritual and corporeal motions, and nature, now conceived as extension, is controlled through the mediation of a mathematical model that is instrumental to the will. It would be going too far to say that in Descartes, natural order is a production of the secularized Eros. But as I have shown elsewhere,[38] the link between intuition and imagination in mathematical thinking leads to an ambiguity concerning the status of abstract ideas that is closely connected to the subordination of natural order to the will, whether in God or in human beings.[39]

Thinking in Descartes is willing to think; the objects of thought, either in themselves or, more importantly, in what we can do with them thanks to the instrumentality of our mental powers,

are subordinated to the highest human passion of *generosité*, which, in its primary sense, is indistinguishable from self-admiration. In order to be truly admirable, we must be masters of ourselves,[40] and this requires us to become masters and possessers of nature. In Plato, there is a separation between Eros and the objects of desire. In Descartes, the inaccessible Platonic Ideas are replaced by constructions of the will as motivated by the principal passion of admiration for independence.

III

As a transition to my remarks about Hegel, I note that in Descartes, reason, will, and passion are closely connected, if not quite identified, by the desire for freedom, which leads the soul to replace Platonic forms with abstract objects of its own production. Eros is replaced by concupiscence on the one hand and on the other, by benevolence, in particular toward oneself. Despite this double negation, it is a striking fact that Descartes has no doctrine of negativity. This is why the *ego cogitans*, despite the interconnectedness of its separate faculties, is not yet the Hegelian spirit (*Geist*).

In more accessible terms, the primacy of the will entails a fundamental instability within the natural order; God could have willed to create the universe in quite another manner. But Descartes ignores the instability of form, as well as the unpredictability of the will, and concentrates upon security and definiteness. He emphasizes the positive side of work or production, as well as the satisfaction of desire through limitation. Descartes seems to lack any appreciation of the fact, recognized by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, that the soul, as erotic, has no determinate form.[41] Diotima calls the soul a juggler, poisoner, and sophist that is neither immortal nor mortal but waxes and wanes in the same day, just as all living things are continuously dying and being reborn.[42] Surprising as it may seem, Plato's analysis of the soul is much closer than Descartes's to what Hegel calls "the peculiar restlessness and dispersion of our modern consciousness."[43]

The intrinsic indeterminateness of the soul is related to the formlessness of the pure intellect (*Nous*) which, as Aristotle puts it, is the form of forms or becomes the form of whatever it thinks precisely

because it has no form of its own.[44] Just as the intellect derives its form from what it thinks, so the erotic soul derives its form from what it desires. I note that the separation between form and desire in Plato is much greater than that between intellect and form in Aristotle. One might almost say that, if we combine the negativity of erotic soul with the identity between the cognized form and the act of cognition, we arrive at Hegel.[45]

For Descartes, limitation, whether of faculties or their constructions, is positive rather than negative. There is no dialectical transformation of one element into another. Hegel, on the other hand, recognizes the fundamentally negative or transformative nature of work, and in particular of the work of the soul: this is his Platonic heritage. He also insists upon the identity of the cognized form in itself (*an sich*) with the form as cognized within consciousness (*für uns*): this is his Aristotelian heritage.[46] As one could express the result, the negativity of spiritual work transforms the initially imperfect shape of the cognized form and develops it into a moment of the absolute concept.

In still simpler language, Platonic Eros and Aristotelian thinking are combined within a Christian sense of subjectivity or spirit so as to overcome the separation between desire and formal structure. The intelligible world is a production of thought, but in a way that overcomes the Cartesian separation between human and divine thinking. We do not construct the world in a Cartesian sense but instead we understand how God created it. And this is to understand the overcoming of the separateness or positivity of limitation by the pervasive excitation of negative spiritual work.[47]

Eros is present in Hegel as work or in his technical language as absolute negativity; that is to say, the externality of nature is suppressed by conceptual thinking,[48] but so too is each finite historical manifestation of the subjective thinker. We produce our history as God produces the universe, namely, in accord with a conceptual order that is both a limit and a fulfilment. Negativity is then inseparable from positivity; freedom is inseparable from necessity. From this standpoint, Hegel's statement that the true is the whole arises from the synthesis of daimonic Eros and the substance of Spinoza.

As Hegel puts this, substance is to be understood as subject or life, and hence in the first instance it is "pure simple negativity," or what Diotima calls the continuous loss of initial shape and the assumption of its opposite. In Hegel's romantic expression, it is "the seriousness, the pain, the patience and work of the negative" that arrives at the fully developed totality of truth.[49] Or still more concretely, Eros is now the desire that is inflected by the struggle for recognition, as generated in the famous dialectic of master and slave, and which can be entirely satisfied only in wisdom.

It is essential to emphasize that Eros is associated in Plato with play and pleasure, whereas in Hegel's revised version, it is associated with serious work and pain. This is a crucial mark of the difference between the pagan and the Lutheran temperament. Hegelian satisfaction is not the same as Platonic blessedness. As Hegel strikingly puts it, "death is the most frightening, and to hold fast to death is what requires the greatest force. The beautiful, which lacks force, hates the understanding because the latter expects of it that of which it is not capable." And again, the life of the spirit "wins its truth only by finding itself within absolute disruption [*Zerrissenheit*]."[50]

Texts like these support the inference that what Hegel calls "the unhappy consciousness" must apply to the full course of self-conscious experience, and perhaps even to its culmination in wisdom. The attainment of freedom within absolute disruption is a preservation as well as an overcoming of disruption. If pagan freedom, as exemplified by Plato, is from a Hegelian standpoint a dream of blessedness, one must wonder whether Hegelian freedom is not transformed by its own inner restlessness into a waking nightmare that one endures by courage rather than by the undiluted thinking of thinking. As Nietzsche's prophet of postmodernism says at the end of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: "Do I think about *happiness*? I think about my *work*."[51]

However this may be, there is no doubt that the satisfaction of desire is for Hegel not simply painful but self-lacerating. The assimilation of the object of desire leads not merely to its destruction but to our own transformation. We are thus born anew from each instance of satisfaction, or as Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopedia*,

the union of subject and object in the satisfaction of desire "is in general *destructive*, as with respect to its content it is self-addictive."[52] The more we are satisfied, the more we desire. This restless addictiveness does not cease with wisdom, but is reproduced as the interior motion of the concept, by which one moment is continuously transformed into the others.

In the *Differenzschrift* of 1801, in which Hegel discusses the difference between the thought of Fichte and Schelling, he makes a general remark that anticipates the later notion of absolute disruption, but in such a way as to attribute it to the origin of philosophy and not to its culmination. He speaks there of the form of philosophy as produced by "the living originality of the Spirit, which has shaped it through its own production and activity, the disrupted harmony [*die zerrissene Harmonie*]." As a harmony, this disunion [*Entzweiung*] itself has a particular form, namely, "the source of the need of philosophy, and as formation [*Bildung*] of the age, it is the unfree given side of the shape of philosophy."[53]

The main point of this passage, stated as simply as possible, is that philosophy emerges from desire, which itself bears the structure of the separation of the subject and the object, but a separation that is located within the subject in two senses, namely, as defined by desire and as overcome through conceptual satisfaction. This is why Hegel alludes to the disrupted harmony of the Spirit. Each such disruption or disunion has a particular historical form that is expressed most fully in the dominant philosophy of the time. Thus the particular way in which each epoch conceives of the separation between the subject and the object, and so how it conceives of its primary task, both defines the age and restricts the spirit or constitutes the unfree dimension in the origination of philosophy, or the pursuit of freedom through the historically conditioned negative work of desire.

Once again we see the subterranean presence of Eros as the mediator between reason and freedom, however different the Hegelian conception of freedom is from that of Plato. Plato possesses the concept of negativity, but as applied to the soul only, not to its desired objects, the pure Ideas. Descartes takes the decisive step of replacing

the separate Ideas with new objects of desire, which are prepared through the assistance of the imagination and subordinated to the will. But he lacks the concept of negativity, and so emphasizes self-independence as limitation; in Hegelian language, Cartesian dualism shows that the truth of nature remains exterior to the subject or *ego cogitans*. This is a dualism that Hegel continues to see in the Kantian distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal. Hegel overcomes Platonist dualism by investing with negativity the form of the desired object as well as the desiring subject.

One should emphasize the interplay in our passage between form and disruption. Hegel retains the traditional view that intelligibility depends upon order or structure. He employs three different words in the passage to designate intelligibility as form: *Form*, *Gestalt*, and *Bildung*. The structure of the particular philosophical discourse of the epoch is a result of the spiritual activity of "shaping" (*gestalten*) through negative work the type of cultivation (*Bildung*) that is peculiar to Spirit in that epoch. But these senses of "form" are united by an underlying sense of formation, in other words, of activity which is primarily negative or *transformational*.[54] Nietzsche's Zarathustra makes this point more simply when he says that he who would create must first destroy.[55]

The disruption or disunion that characterizes the Spirit at each historical epoch is negative or deconstructive. Although negation has a "positive" goal in the sense of completeness or the overcoming of the separation between every determination and its opposite, completeness is not static; it is not a Platonic heaven or harmony of eternal elements, each of which is forever itself and nothing else. The negative excitation of the subject is also to be found within the formal elements, and for two closely related reasons. First, the attempt to think each separate element is impossible and demonstrates their interconnectedness in themselves or *an sich*. Second, as intelligible, the elements of intelligibility are already *within* thinking or subjectivity.

I can now state the conclusion of my brief survey of Hegel's transformation of Eros in the pursuit of freedom through reason. In Plato, it is Eros or the soul that continuously changes its shape,

not the Ideas. Despite the soul's intrinsic restlessness, we can achieve an intimation of completeness even from an incomplete apprehension of the Ideas. The negative excitation of the soul is then stabilized, or arranged in what Nietzsche calls a "rank-ordering" of identities. We remain lovers, and so marked by a perpetually unsatisfied desire, but we are defined by the rank-ordering of our desires.

Hegel on the contrary rejects the status of permanent lover of wisdom; he insists upon wisdom or satisfaction of desire. Since wisdom depends upon the union of soul and Ideas, or of subject and object, by the activity of negative excitation, it also depends upon the completion of this negative excitation in a totality. The Platonic rank-ordering of the souls must be applied to the formal moments of intelligibility as well. The negative motion never ceases, but it must continuously reproduce the same order. This is what Hegel means when he says that the true is the whole and that the whole is circular.[56]

If freedom is the satisfaction of desire, then only the wise man can be free. Negativity, the mediating link between freedom and reason, must be completely mastered in the structure of the discursive concept. But negativity is for Hegel neither sheer nothingness nor a static form with its own identity. We perceive negativity in the apparently endless process of birth and death, of formation and destruction, in the replacement of one form of order or culture by another. The crucial premise of Hegel's entire teaching is that the results of negative work are cumulative and circular: in simple language, Hegel assumes that he can demonstrate his own wisdom without depending upon indemonstrable presuppositions which are outside the system, and to which our freedom and our rationality are in bondage.

In my opinion, there are only two ways in which Hegel could accomplish his task; let us call them the negative and the positive way. The negative way depends upon the equation of wisdom with the conceptual understanding of the ubiquitously recurring structure of negativity. But this line of demonstration cannot establish the satisfiability of desires which, despite their negative interior, always manifest themselves positively as the desire of something

or another. Hegel must therefore show that after a certain point, already reached in human history, the positive identities of our desires simply repeat themselves.

The negative way is therefore transformed into the positive way. Hegel has no choice but to address himself to human history, and Hegelians have no recourse but to contend that history is complete in the aforementioned sense that there are and can be no new desires. The argument from history, incidentally, is equivalent to the Hegelian claim that the concept has fully revealed itself, or in other words that his logic is truly a science, namely, that it is true because it is complete. But the point is perhaps easier to see with respect to history.

The defective nature of the positive argument is evident. Even if the positive form of desire is finite or circular, infinite repetitiveness leads to endless boredom, not to blessedness or positive satisfaction. The one man who attempted to make this argument in a rigorous and comprehensive manner, Alexandre Kojève, arrived at a definition of the satisfaction of the sage as consisting in making love and performing the Japanese tea ceremony.[57] In other words, the advent of wisdom leads to boredom, hence to the disappearance of the human being in the sense of philosopher, and to the appearance of the post-historical animal on the one hand or the pure aesthete on the other. It would be indiscreet to investigate too closely this Kojèvian symbolism as a prophetic anticipation of postmodernism.

I retreat to safer ground by observing that the interpretation of the negative interior of perpetually returning desires corresponds very well to Nietzsche's doctrine of the chaotic interior of the eternal return of the same. When the interior triumphs over the exterior, sameness is replaced by difference, and we arrive at the popular ideology of the second half of the Twentieth Century. The Heideggerian destruction of tradition, a development of Hegel's conception of disruption, is replaced in its turn by Derridean deconstruction. So too Heidegger's conception of freedom as finitude, that is, as a synthesis of Cartesian independence or *generosité* with Hegelian *Bildung*, is replaced by the postmodern conception of freedom as indeterminateness, otherness, or in short as negation without position.

The story of the attempt by western European philosophy to unite freedom and reason, which I have represented here in my remarks on Plato, Descartes, and Hegel, could hardly be described as the portrait of a triumph. It would be tempting, if not entirely satisfactory, to draw from this story the inference that the excessive desire for freedom is unreasonable and leads sooner or later to slavery of a kind more complete than that attributed to the ostensibly reifying doctrines of Plato, because it culminates either in the boredom of positivism or the chaos of a comprehensive negation.

In saying this, I do not intend to recommend a return to Platonism. As a resident of modernity and a qualified admirer of enlightenment, I prefer to conclude that Hegel was certainly right in emphasizing the connection, and even the inseparableness, of position and negation. Freedom is a limitation in the historical sense that it has no absolute or universally valid form.

To call freedom a first principle is to say that it can and must assume differing identities at different times and in different places. The inner truth of Platonism, a truth that is much deeper than its criticism of democracy, is that the soul is marked by Eros or desire and cannot produce its own limits or historical identities. This is a truth that continues to be valid for those who pursue today the relation between freedom and reason.

Notes

1 This paper was delivered as the Companys Lecture at the University of Barcelona, October 1992 [ed.].
2 *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969; Reprinted with the Preface to the Portuguese Translation: South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2000).
3 For a detailed discussion of this ambiguity, see my two essays, "The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry" and "The Role of Eros in Plato's *Republic*" in my book, *The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 1988).
4 *Republic* IX, 573d3.
5 VI, 500d4–8.
6 VI, 499b7–c2.
7 253c6–9.
8 *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1951), I, 31.

9 *Les passions de l'âme*, introduction and notes by G. Rodis-Lewis (Paris: J. Vrin: 1955), Title to *Première Partie* and Article I, p. 65. All references to Descartes are to this edition. Roman numerals refer to Articles and Arabic numerals to page-numbers.
10 I, 65.
11 XC, 130.
12 202d8–e7.
13 LXIX, 115; CXLV, 170; CLXI, 184: *Generosité* is "la clef de toutes les autres vertus."
14 CXLVI, 172.
15 L, 105; CXLIV, 169.
16 XLVIII, 103; XLIX, 104.
17 XLI, 96.
18 XLV, 99; there is an echo here of the philosophical rhetoric described by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, but as applied to a radically more activist end than was intended by Socrates.
19 XLVIII, 103.
20 CLII, 177.
21 In his recent study, *Descartes and the Enlightenment* (McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston and Montreal: 1989), Peter Schouls emphasizes the importance of freedom, mastery, and progress in the Cartesian enterprise and treats Descartes as the crucial predecessor of the Enlightenment. I agree with his general thesis.
22 LXX, 116.
23 LXXV, 119.
24 LXXVI, 120.
25 155d1–5.
26 *A*, 982b12.
27 LXXIX, 121.
28 LXXXI, 123.
29 LXXXV, 126–27.
30 LXXXVI, 127.
31 XC, 130.
32 LXXXII, LXXXIII, 124–26.
33 XCI, 131; CXXXIX, 164.
34 CXXXIX, 165.
35 LXIII, 113.
36 CXLVIII, 174.
37 XLVIII, 105.
38 "A Central Ambiguity in Descartes" in *The Ancients and The Moderns* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989; Reprint: South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2002), Chapter Two. See especially text and references 19 and 20 on page 27.
39 See *Passions*, CCXI, 215 ff. After reminding us that the passions are intrinsically good and become bad only through misuse, Descartes advises us that they, and hence their use, can be controlled by reflection upon

the imagination, which tends to mislead the intellect by exaggerating or minimizing the objects of the passions. This function of the imagination can have good as well as bad consequences.

40 *Passions*, CLII, 177.
41 Or none that could be described by a mortal; see *Phaedrus* 246a3 ff.
42 *Symposium* 203d7 f.; 207d6–e5.
43 *Wissenschaft der Logik*, *Bd.* I, p. 20.
44 *De Anima* III, 8: 431b21, 432a2.
45 Aristotle does, however, distinguish between intellect and desire; the former moves us by way of the latter, not directly: *De Anima* III, 9: 433a1–3. Hegel makes motion common to intellect and desire.
46 *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1988), pp. 63 ff. Cf. *Logik* I, 14 and 18 and, for the unification of opposites as well as of *an sich* and *für sich*, 42.
47 The difference between Hegel and Descartes can be inferred from the following assertion in the *Logik* (II, 398): "An seinen Werkzeugen besitzt der Mensch die Macht über die äusserliche Natur, wenn er auch nach seinen Zwecken ihr vielmehr unterworfen ist."
48 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg: 1969), p. 313, par. 381.
49 *Phänomenologie*, pp. 14 f.
50 *Phänomenologie*, p. 26.
51 *Also sprach Zarathustra* in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York: 1980), *Bd.* IV, p. 408.
52 *Enzyklopädie*, p. 350, par, 428.
53 *Jenaer kritische Schriften* (*I*) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1979), p. 10.
54 At the very end of Hegel's *Logik*, he emphasizes that the culminating synthesis is *Bewegung* and *Tätigkeit* (II, 499).
55 *Also sprach Zarathustra* in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York: 1967 ff.), *Bd.* IV, *s.* 75: "Immer vernichtet, wer ein Schopfer sein müss."
56 *Logik*, II, 503–04.
57 *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel, deuxième édition* (Paris: NRF, 1947), pp. 436 f.

CHAPTER TEN

Review of Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity, *by Steven Smith (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987)*

The title of this book provides us with an exemplary indication of its contents. Steven Smith explores the main elements of Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise* with particular attention to its implications for the Enlightenment and modern liberalism on the one hand and Spinoza's proffered solution to "the Jewish problem" on the other. The latter can be briefly stated, as Smith himself says: "Spinoza's solution to the theologico-political problem can be summarized in a single word: assimilation" (200). Somewhat more expansively, Judaism served Spinoza as a stalking-horse for Christianity (56), or more generally, revealed religion, which he wished to be replaced by a universal religion of reason (136), similar to the one advocated by Lessing (180). This is perhaps the most important single prerequisite for the establishment of a secular democratic state, one, that is to say, that will be dedicated to the development of the "autonomous individual or liberated self" (122), and so itself be marked by a complete freedom of thinking, at least (in Spinoza's own formulation) for those who possess the power to think freely. Such a state is most nearly approached by contemporary Amsterdam, a flourishing commercial republic; it will be marked by the free development of the arts and sciences. Indeed, this progress is possible only in the presence of commercial freedom (24, 163). We can therefore say that Spinoza differs from Hobbes most decisively in making the preservation of freedom in the form of the autonomous individual the end of the state, rather than peace (27 *et passim*). Correlatively, he anticipates Montesquieu, Smith, and Hume by citing the pacific powers

of avarice, contrary to the presuppositions of the classical and civic republicans. Spinoza also adapts certain aspects of Stoicism to his purposes; in particular, he emphasizes the importance of courage (*fortitudo*), albeit he connects this with modern versions of the Stoic goals of personal autonomy and self-mastery (160).

The *Treatise* is of course celebrated for its seminal role in the development of modern historically oriented Biblical hermeneutics, and Smith devotes considerable space to this topic. Since Spinoza is obviously attempting to "deconstruct" (110) Christian morality under the partial cover of a sharp criticism of the Jewish religion and its Scriptural sources, his own interpretation of the Bible is a curious blend of "scientific" or historically sophisticated philology as well as a not-so-covert attempt to refute the effort, typified by Maimonides, to read Aristotle into the Bible while inseminating into Scripture his own "universal," radically simplified version of the "genuine" Biblical teaching on morality and religion. This teaching, of which the principles are love of one's neighbor and obedience to the law (of the state), comes very close to the advocacy of the doctrine that might makes right and that whereas people are free to think as they are able, the practice of religion must be under the complete control of the state. As Smith, notes, this produces the most striking paradox in the *Treatise*: Spinoza argues for the radical separation of philosophy and theology, only to settle for the political control of theology (151). I am not sure that Smith provides us with a satisfactory resolution of this paradox. Presumably he takes Spinoza to be advocating the protection of the free and autonomous individual by a very strong state control over religion. Clerics will be deprived of the power to foment insurrections (153–154) and the power of the state, despite its democratic form, gravitates toward a uniformity of behavior through the regulations of the universal church (112). Spinoza's hermeneutics thus derives a doctrine of toleration and freedom from Scripture (81 f.) that will ostensibly institute a new democratic, commercially oriented order in which self-interest, avarice, and freedom of thought will pacify the intelligent minority while the universal church and the muscle furnished by the strong central government will keep the multitude in line.

As Smith rightly notes, Spinoza thus casts himself in the role of the new Moses of this new political regime (113).

There can be little if any doubt that Spinoza had no personal sympathy for revealed religion, which he attributed to the imagination, or that his genuine views on God and religion are to be found in the *Ethics*, not the *Theologico-Political Treatise* (2, 115). It is obvious that Spinoza does not simply use "coded" language in the *Treatise* but that he lies, whether nobly or otherwise, as political occasion requires. Spinoza belongs to that long line of philosopher-prophets or legislators running from Socrates to Nietzsche, none of them particularly "liberal" as that term is used in the present century, for example, with respect to John Rawls or Isaiah Berlin. I think that Smith exaggerates Spinoza's liberalism, even though he himself provides us with sufficient evidence to cast a long shadow of doubt over that characterization. It is of course true that Spinoza is the first major philosopher to speak out on behalf of democracy, but a close look at the details of his two political treatises soon shows that by this term, he means a kind of aristocracy of merit. On the other hand, Spinoza is certainly one of the founding fathers of the liberal branch of the Enlightenment that dominates among contemporary western liberals. Historical circumstances required Spinoza to practice extreme caution in articulating his doctrines, but they lead unmistakably to a scientific and commercial society, lacking in religious convictions beyond adherence to a banal and empty version of philanthropy and patriotism. I am not persuaded that the best way to describe the citizen of Spinoza's recommended polity is as a free, autonomous, and courageous individual. This description, if it fits anyone, would have to be reserved for the genuine philosophers who would inevitably live a partly concealed or accommodated existence in a not-very-liberal state. As to the Jews, to come back to the starting-point of this review, surely those who excommunicated Spinoza were right. Whatever occasional remarks he may make about the virtues of the Jews or the possibility of a second homeland in Palestine, the premise of Spinoza's Zionism, as Smith points out on the second-last page of his book, is the rejection of the Torah and redemption (204).

In this brief account, I have not been able to touch on all of the aspects of Smith's book. It is a thorough, well-documented consideration of the stated theme: Spinoza as a liberal and as an all-too-liberal student of the Jewish Scripture. The book contains no surprises for those who are familiar with the Spinoza scholarship of Leo Strauss, whom Smith follows rather closely, except with respect to Smith's central aim: "to restore a more human and a more political dimension to Spinoza's accomplishments" (12). Thus, according to Smith, Strauss downplays the political importance of the *Treatise*, which (apparently contrary to Strauss's interpretation) was intended to liberate politics, not just philosophy, from religion (see however note 95). In my opinion, the attempt to give Spinoza "a more human face" is based upon a misperception of his philosophy, which is about as inhuman as a philosophy can get. Spinoza's political writings have as their primary goal "freedom of philosophizing," which in turn is restricted to those who have the power or capacity to philosophize. It is necessary to regulate the human race in an orderly manner, and so to attend to their welfare, in order to preserve philosophy and to ensure the cultivation and preservation of kindred philosophical spirits. For whatever it is worth, I have come to the conclusion, some forty-two years after writing my doctoral dissertation on the *Theologico-Political Treatise* under the supervision of Leo Strauss, that we humans must always beware of those who profess to see our welfare as connected to the *amor intellectualis dei*. Smith presumably disagrees with me, but I found his well-constructed and very competent book of assistance to me in clarifying my thoughts on the topics that he treats so thoroughly.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Paradigms of Philosophizing and the Future of Philosophy

I

I have often been told that my view of philosophy is old-fashioned.[1] Not only does it appear, according to my critics, that I am out of date, but even further, that I am a Platonist, an Aristotelian, a Straussian (presumably the reference is to Leo rather than to David Friedrich Strauss), a reactionary, an elitist, a soft-headed litterateur, a metaphysician, and even (as I was once charged by a Catholic monarchist) a left-wing relativist. It would be tempting but perhaps a bit vain to conclude that I am all things to all mortals. In a less frivolous spirit, I suppose that each of these charges is the expression of some deeply held "paradigm" of philosophizing. The inconsistency of these "paradigms" (if that is what they are) allows me to hope that my critics are in the grip of various *idées fixes*, not all of which can provide an accurate vision of what I am about. I want further to suggest that what has confused them is precisely my refusal to subscribe to a paradigm of philosophizing. I insist that I am a philosopher *tout court*. It now remains to explain how this differs from instantiating a paradigm.

A paradigm is a model, that is to say, a formal representation of a theory, or of the structure of an empirical state, but also in another sense an ectype or an *eidos* of a family of existing particulars. What could be meant by "paradigms of philosophizing"? Presumably there is no question here of an ectype or a species-form in the sense of the ontological presence of phenomenological looks of a given kind. Furthermore, the use of the plural entails that there can be more than one paradigm of philosophizing, which of course raises the question of how we choose among them. We are here in the penumbra of the today fashionable distinction between philosophy and metaphilosophy, a distinction that I find unintelligible.

The metaphilosophical level is presumably at once higher than and so legislative of the proper activity of philosophy as it addresses itself to the resolution of particular theoretical issues. Since this level is conceptually prior to that of the paradigm that determines our philosophical convictions, it is presumably both prephilosophical and yet philosophical; or at least it is philosophical if there is anything philosophical about deciding how to philosophize. But how *do* we "decide" how to philosophize? It cannot be in obedience to our paradigms, since we have not yet constructed them. From this standpoint, the significance of one's paradigm of philosophy rests upon nonphilosophical considerations, unless of course one "formalizes" the metaphilosophical domain by subjecting it to yet another paradigm, derived from the meta-metaphilosophical level and thus selected by analogously nonphilosophical criteria. The assumption, in short, is that there are no philosophical criteria for the selection of one's philosophical paradigm.

The other alternative, which I favor, is that what is quite misleadingly called here the metaphilosophical level is the only genuinely philosophical level, and that philosophy is in its deepest and truest manifestation the perpetual attempt to identify its own nature. In this case, one is continuously engaged in the attempt to construct one's paradigm, which is to say that one has no paradigm of a finished sort. What I am saying can easily be misconstrued to mean that there is no philosophical treatment of a particular question, but only philosophizing about the nature of philosophy. My point is rather that there can be no philosophical work on particular issues, no posing or resolving of philosophical dilemmas, unless we know what philosophy is. And we certainly do not acquire an answer to this question by adopting a paradigm of philosophizing.

Reactionary as it will sound to my critics, I prefer to think of philosophy as a *theia dōsis*, a gift from the gods, like the Socratic *erōs* that possesses us by descending from above and carries us upward in order that we may see what lies below thanks to the agency of the celestial illumination. The domain of metaphilosophy may then itself be reinterpreted as the divine *skopos* of philosophical *erōs*, and not as a language within which we create philosophy as an artificial

language. In less metaphorical terms, philosophy is a way of seeing and understanding, not a method or a set of principles or doctrines. If this is right, then there is no effective paradigm of philosophizing. It is impossible to "formalize" a way of seeing; there is no formalization procedure that applies to metaphilosophy, and the acts of vision that in my metaphor correspond to what is called the choice of a philosophical paradigm are in fact not discursive accounts or tablets of rules defining the sound procedure for doing philosophical work; they are the work itself. In the usual sense of the expression, on the other hand, the domain of metaphilosophy is nothing other than the contingent flow of history. In other words, when we select our paradigm of philosophizing from among its competitors by an ostensibly "downward" gaze from the superior heights of metaphilosophy, we are actually succumbing to the fashionable ideologies of the day.

I have been suggesting that philosophy has no past, no present, and no future; these modes of temporal or historical existence are reserved for philosophical doctrines, and so too for paradigms of philosophizing. Let me try to expand this point with a reference to what is called today postmodernism. I am thinking more particularly of the thesis that philosophy is dead, or finished, or that we now inhabit a post-Hegelian epoch of thinking. If this thesis is demonstrable, it can only be through a competent exposition of what it means to inhabit a pre-Hegelian (not to mention a Hegelian) epoch, or in other words what it means to understand philosophy in terms that culminate in Hegel, and so what philosophy was like when it was alive. Indeed, we should be required to show that philosophy was in fact born, that it actually existed, and so was capable of dying. I know of no such attempt among postmodernists. The truth is that they suppose this attempt to have been carried out for them by Heidegger, or somewhat more expansively by the Nietzsche of Heidegger's imagination. In slightly different terms, postmodernist forays into the history of the late lamented philosophy take the form of rhetorical expostulations or funeral orations, delivered in the orotund rhetoric of the new paradigm. Some are quite interesting in their own right; others are merely amusing, not the least of the virtues.

But interest and amusement, wherever they may rank on the list of virtues, are not sufficient for philosophy; they are certainly not sufficient as a demonstration of the death of philosophy. The demonstration of death, at least among competent physicians, normally takes place prior to the funeral. The putative corpse is subjected to a variety of procedures that are designed to establish the termination of life. These procedures are scientific, not incantatory. In other words, we cannot establish the death of philosophy by beginning to sing our post-philosophical dirges: We must do so by an accurate inspection of philosophy, and this is possible only for philosophers. Any other method, even if it is called "postphilosophical" or "postmodern," will not do the job; in particular, the job cannot be done if the terms of the pronouncement of death explicitly preclude the possibility of perceiving the corpse as a living organism. To state this bluntly for the sake of those who dislike metaphors, if the assertion of a new paradigm is a "paradigm-shift" or radical change of perspective, as defined by a new method or set of principles, or for that matter by mere fiat, then we can of course see nothing but what we assert to be visible.

Postmodernism, underneath the specious glitter of its rhetoric of originality, and indeed, precisely because of that rhetoric, is a philosophy of history. To say that history is finished is itself a statement in the philosophy of history. But a philosophy of history owes us an explanation of history. If on the other hand it is true, as some recent sages have averred, that reading is writing, then of course we are not only released from the obligation to read history but forever prevented from doing so, since the very effort to read produces instead a new writing, just as the attempt to read what one has oneself written is itself immediately concealed by yet another writing, and so on to infinity.

Now despite the previous paragraphs, I am not a radical opponent of the postmodernist thesis. What I oppose is the reduction of philosophy to art; that is, I oppose the conception of philosophy as a matter of choosing among paradigms, and so of reducing philosophy to an arbitrary expression of the will, or better, of the fantasy, and even worse, of the historically besotted fantasy

that takes itself in all of its banality to be "original." Philosophy is not amenable to paradigmatic formalization because it has no structure; it is rather openness to the whole. Philosophy is like the Aristotelian *nous* that is able to receive all forms precisely because it has no form.

My objection to postmodernism can be best summarized in the statement that philosophy has nothing to do with history. I purposely put this in as provocative a manner as possible, since we have been deafened by the rhetoric of historicism for over one hundred and fifty years. But my assertion is in no sense peculiar to Platonism or Aristotelianism, as would automatically be assumed by some thoughtless persons. I can support this assertion by referring to Nietzsche, who writes of himself and his fellow philosophers under the locution "We Hyperboreans," and who conveys the sense of this expression in his image of the vision of the gateway *Augenblick*, the gateway of the eternal return of history, a vision that is accessible to Zarathustra, and so too to the spirit of gravity, from the mountain path that stands outside and above that gateway. We Hyperboreans have the choice of willing ourselves to enter into the gateway, *but we need not*. We may instead join the crew of the ship that takes Zarathustra away from the blessed isles on the eternal and eternally dangerous journey of exploration into far distant seas and continents.

I allow myself one more citation from Nietzsche. Man, says Zarathustra, is the "not yet fully-constructed animal." What exactly does this mean? Man is the not yet fully constructed *animal*; he is not *fully* but thus he is indeed *partially* constructed. Man is the animal that is in the process of completing the construction that was begun for him by nature, but that nature alone will never complete. And indeed, "completion" is for man nothing more nor less than the act of engaging in the process toward completion, a completion that will never be reached so long as man remains man. Man as man is an *animal*, neither a god nor a machine, and certainly not a *deus ex machina*. In sum: of course man has a "nature," or there would be nothing to overcome, nor would overcoming be distinguishable from going under, *zugrunde gehen* in the

destructive rather than the constructive sense of that dialectical expression (which Zarathustra, in unconscious imitation of Hegel, uses on occasion).

The relevance of this passage to the preceding discussion is as follows. Philosophy is equivalent to the "going to ground" intrinsic to the process of the human effort to finish the task, set us by nature, of self-construction. It can be described by the metaphor of the Hyperboreans, who dwell far to the North, inaccessible by land or by sea (and so alas not in St. Petersburg), or in other words outside of historical (but not of course cosmological) time. By a shift of metaphor, validated by poetic license, the Hyperboreans do not circle history from within the perimeter of the eternal return but are outside it. A loss of historical "situatedness" is the necessary price one pays for philosophy. Whether we speak of standing on a mountain and looking down upon the gateway into history, or of voyaging from continent to continent on a never-ending journey of exploration, the meaning is the same. Philosophy endures its historical corruptions into positions, movements, doctrines, systems, counter-systems, and worst of all, works of "originality"—in sum, it eludes its dissolution into the multiplicity of paradigms. Philosophy is born and dies, only to be born again, because its birth and death is a temporal fantasm of the original, which cannot be affected by historical fashions.

II

Have I, despite everything, just sketched my "paradigm" of philosophy? Perhaps. I must leave it to my readers to decide. The question set me is the future of philosophy and the Humanities. On this point I distinguish between what I shall call the transcendental and the immanent standpoint. By "immanent" I refer to the course of empirical history. The "transcendental" is another name for the standpoint of the Hyperborean. From that standpoint, philosophy is entirely safe from all vulgarizations. It will make its ports of call, like the crewmembers of Zarathustra's ship, and depart when its curiosity has been sated or it is no longer welcome. With respect to the immanent standpoint of our actual historical existence, I am not

entirely without hope. What follows has to do exclusively with this "historical" hope.

We live in a generation of great foolishness. When has it been otherwise? Nevertheless, some generations are more foolish than others. I remind you that during the first half of the twentieth century, founding or preeminent figures like Husserl, Heidegger, Bergson, Whitehead, Russell, and Wittgenstein, to mention only the most outstanding, were all with us at one interval or another. *Die Götter sind entflohen von dieser dürftiger Zeit.* We are left with movements but with no founders: analytical, continental, hermeneutical, postmodern, deconstructivist, and so on. Philosophy has descended from Zarathustra's mountain into the columns of the newspapers and intellectual reviews. In many ways, the results are quite amusing, unless one is excessively serious, something that I respect but find a bit enervating.

But beyond amusement and seriousness, the very confusion of the present generation may hold out to us a recurrence of what Hegel calls "the night in which all cows are black," or to paraphrase, the penultimate negation which is awaiting only the negation of the negation in order to invert itself into the positivity of a new epoch of philosophy. And by "new epoch" I mean here a return to the old understanding of philosophy as responsibility for the whole, a responsibility that is itself the only ground or foundation for philosophy. I am well aware that some will find this formulation an empty exercise in rhetoric. But in the space of ten pages I could hardly be expected to lay out the details of a revolutionary new beginning; Heidegger takes some five hundred in his *Beiträge*.

I can dispense with the remaining 490 pages because, unlike Heidegger, I am not advocating "another way." I speak on behalf of the old way, which is always new because it can enter into any time and assume the lineaments of the moment. This old way is quite simple. One can even give it a Heideggerian formulation: the philosopher is open to the whole. There are no methodological instructions for openness, no special procedures that can be defined in advance and which lead us infallibly to a genuinely philosophical vision. Everything has to be argued out anew, from whatever

vantage point one adopts at the moment. This of course entails that we are always prepared to assume a different vantage point, since there are no rules that dictate the assumption of one or another.

I sense that this brief description of philosophical openness will be regarded by many as quite unsatisfactory, as impossibly vague, even as banal. It would be much more satisfying for me to issue a proclamation propounding a new paradigm, a fresh vision, an algorithm for distinguishing sense from nonsense. I will not do this, because it amounts to the reduction of philosophy to bad poetry. But there is one step that I can take in discussing the future of philosophy. This future emerges from the present, from the human endeavor to live well, and so to understand the difference between nobility and baseness. Philosophy is rooted not simply in theoretical wonder but also in what I shall call existential shame. If we are incapable of perceiving the divine, whether in the pagan or Judeo-Christian sense of that term, if we cannot distinguish between honor and dishonor, if the truth is for us a predicate to be applied to propositions but lacking in ontological substance, if our very attempt to grasp what Nietzsche called *Rangordnung* leads us to a celebration of perspectival relativity, if our capacity to be ashamed of ourselves for having sunk into this lethargy is itself masked by boredom and spiritual energy has deteriorated into narcissism, then of course philosophy is impossible.

I would therefore like to suggest, as my positive contribution to the conference on paradigms of philosophizing and the future of the Humanities, that the contemporary task of the philosopher, assuming that there are any left, is to induce shame in the members of the cultivated stratum of European society. All great philosophy is propelled at the human level by moral outrage purified of vengeance, and at the divine level by shame purified of sentimentality. A pure moral outrage cannot be furnished upon demand; but at least we are in a position to abase ourselves in shame at the depths to which we have sunk.

At first glance, shame is precisely the quality of which we have no need. What is now called, at least in America, "political correctness" is the latest manifestation of the convulsive shame that has

loosened the muscles and darkened the vision of the ideological spokesmen for European civilization. I would never deny that much of this shame is justified. But the point is not to assign blame; it is to ascertain the desirability of inducing even more of that currently debilitating spiritual condition. Is it too paradoxical to speak of the need for a shame before shame? Can there not be a kind of spiritual double negation that will transform the dark night of the soul, in which all cows are black, into an age of illumination? I myself wonder whether it is realistic to speak of a rejuvenation of philosophy in a time of decadence, a rejuvenation of openness to the whole, and so to the desire to see things whole, as the implementation of the love of wisdom. Do we not rather require some more concretely articulated program to guide us into the future? Can it be that what we need is in fact a new paradigm for philosophizing?

Note

1 This paper was prepared for but not delivered at the Second International Conference of Philosophy and Culture, St. Petersburg, August 1995 [ed.].

CHAPTER TWELVE

Comment on Catherine Zuckert's Postmodern Platos: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, Derrida *(Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996)*

In her interesting and valuable book, Catherine Zuckert attempts to explain how the Plato interpretations of Nietzsche and Heidegger prepare the thought of three important "postmodern" figures: H. G. Gadamer, Leo Strauss, and Jacques Derrida.[1] The term "postmodern" is not normally applied to the first two figures. Strauss is often presented, somewhat misleadingly, as a spokesman for the premodern, whereas Gadamer, despite his early adherence to the Heidegger of the period preceding and culminating in *Being and Time*, identified himself in later years as a Platonist. One thing is certainly clear. Strauss, Gadamer, and Derrida are decisively influenced by Heidegger, and hence by Nietzsche, but not at all in the same way.

One could defend Zuckert's terminology in the following manner. Postmodernism is either identical with or a direct consequence of Heidegger's radical revision of Nietzsche, namely, the attempt to destroy the western metaphysical tradition in order to clear the ground for what Heidegger calls "the other way." This destruction is necessary because of the decadence and nihilism into which an exhausted Europe has fallen, and which prevents any further vital or noble development of the human spirit, or again in Heidegger's more radical terminology, of the "gift" of the present epoch of Being. Strauss, Gadamer, and Derrida are representatives of three main reactions to the Heideggerian revolution. Let me call them for the moment the responses of the right, the center, and the left, respectively.

Before I clarify this characterization, something more needs to be said about the theoretical content of postmodernism. To state the essential point as briefly as possible, Heidegger accepts very early in his career Nietzsche's destruction of traditional rationalism as well as the correlative thesis of the hermeneutical character of human experience. I note in passing that both theses are very far from being anti-scientific or alien to the branch of the modern tradition known as British empiricism. Nietzsche's doctrine is already implicit in Galileo's distinction between primary and secondary attributes on the one hand, and the primacy given by empiricism to sense perception, imagination, and the will on the other. The true world becomes a fable because it was already a fable in renaissance positivism. All that is required to make this obvious is the dissolution of the transcendental ego into the historical consciousness and the realization that mathematical physics has no human significance whatsoever: in other words, that the celebration of modern science is rhetoric, not rationalism, or that rationalism is just another form of metaphysical rhetoric.

To describe this line of development in different terms, Nietzsche replaces Plato's synthesis of the philosopher and warrior by a new synthesis of the artist and warrior. The warrior who serves the Platonic philosopher has a purely defensive function. But the task of Nietzsche's warrior is aggressive and destructive. In Zarathustra's words, "he who would create must first destroy." The inner paradox of Nietzsche's proposed solution to nihilism is that creation is itself a rhetorical mask for destruction, since chaos is at the heart of all beings. Heidegger misinterprets Nietzsche's doctrine of chaos by transforming it into the hidden source for the gift of Being that is to provide us with the other way.[2] Otherwise put, Heidegger transforms Nietzsche's psychological teaching, at first into an ontological doctrine, and then into a post-ontological fantasy. The ontologist is thus conquered by the artist, or let me rather say that Nietzschean art is replaced by Heideggerian *kitsch*.

I want to make one more general point about postmodernism. One can also understand it as a product of what is in effect the attempt by Nietzsche and Heidegger, no doubt due to the cunning

of reason, to simplify Hegelian logic. Hegel's is the last great effort to preserve rationalism by a dialectico-speculative unification of the ancients and the moderns. This is also a unification of eternity and temporality through what I will call a dynamic interpretation of actuality. Hegel transfers to *dunamis* the function of *energeia*; in so doing, he makes the *logos* creative. By unifying eternity and temporality, he preserves creativity from destruction. One sees the ghost of Hegel's concept in Nietzsche's myth of the eternal return of the same. Heidegger, who believes himself to constitute an advance over Hegel, is instead a left-Hegelian in the sense that he makes *dunamis* or *Möglichkeit* higher than *energeia* or *Wirklichkeit*. The circle of eternity is accordingly replaced by the infinite process of new "gifts," i.e., by the eternal return of the dissimilar. It is on this point, incidentally, that Kojève's Hegel-interpretation differs from that of Heidegger. The latter's doctrine of the epochal nature of Being is conceptually simpler than Kojève's Hegelianism, although it is more resonant of melodramatic bathos and hence seems more "poetic" or "deeper" to some ears. The next step is from Heidegger to Deleuze and Derrida, who simplify still farther by dropping *energeia* or actuality altogether. This leads directly to chaos, or the reinstitution of Nietzsche's substitute for ontology. Unfortunately, the Frenchmen replace Nietzsche's rhetoric of nobility with the clever chatter of infinite difference. Without the preservation of nobility from cleverness, however, there is no way in which to distinguish between high and low chatter. *Différance* is transformed into demotic noise, or as we call it in America, the abolition of the distinction between high and popular culture. In more abstract language, identity is dissolved into difference.

I have now explained why I refer to Derrida as the response of the left to the Heideggerian revolution. Let me next say a word or two about Gadamer. I put Gadamer in the center because he attempts to combine Platonism and Heideggerian hermeneutics in a way that eliminates the radical elements of both orientations. Otherwise stated, Gadamer wishes to preserve the western tradition while at the same time allowing for the fecundity of an open horizon of interpretation. This is evident from his doctrine of *Horizontverschmelzung*

or the fusion of horizons, which I have examined elsewhere in some detail.[3] Here I can say only that in Gadamer, just as in the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, the moment of the present, within which we ostensibly apprehend and interpret whatever is of human concern, has no independent status but is constituted paradoxically as a synthesis of two infinite regressions of interpretations, one issuing from the past and the other about to be produced by the future.

The net result is that Gadamer's ontology of play, as he refers to the theoretical underpinning of his treatment of art, is on the one hand too abstract to help us with the task of understanding any particular art-work, and on the other too fluid or temporalized to account for the stability of the object of interpretation. This criticism of course in no way challenges the learning and cultivation of Gadamer's concrete interpretations. But we are discussing philosophy this afternoon. Speaking as an old Hegelian, I have to say that Gadamer's generous conservatism is an exhibition of "the broken middle" or the effort to articulate a dialectic of historical time without the adequate conceptual tools. Gadamer's "reasonableness" is therefore no defense against the radical unreasonableness of Derrida.

I believe we can say that Gadamer's Platonism has been dissolved from within by the vestiges of his allegiance to Heidegger. Platonism is something more than a way of life, if the latter expression is taken to mean the adoption of an urbane stance toward the history of high culture. And this brings us to Leo Strauss, or the example of the response by the right to the Heideggerian revolution. The structure of Zuckert's book makes it obvious that Strauss is the intended hero, and I will have more to say about him than about Gadamer and Derrida. Strauss is a revolutionary thinker, not a conservative, as he is so often portrayed by those who can see no deeper than his exoteric doctrine. I call him a man of the right because he actually tries to preserve modern liberalism without explicitly jettisoning the great European tradition, or, perhaps even more important, who tries to rehabilitate, and thus to reappropriate, the practical intelligence of the ancient Greeks without obscuring it by Hegelian logic or dissolving it in post-Hegelian ontologies

of history. The question is whether Strauss's revolution of the right is grounded on a sufficient theoretical basis.

Consider the following passage from an important essay by Strauss, "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism." As a result of Heidegger's influence, "There is no longer in existence a philosophic position, apart from neo-Thomism and Marxism crude or refined. All rational liberal philosophic positions have lost their significance and power. One may deplore this, but I for one cannot bring myself to clinging to philosophic positions which have been shown to be inadequate. I am afraid that we shall have to make a very great effort in order to find a solid basis for rational liberalism. Only a great thinker could help us in our intellectual plight. But here is the great trouble: the only great thinker in our time is Heidegger."[4]

In the absence of a great contemporary thinker to defend us against Heidegger, Strauss in effect turns back to a great ancient thinker as the solid basis for rational liberalism. But unfortunately, Strauss's interpretation of the Platonic Ideas is not sufficiently strong to serve as a foundation for rationalism. I cannot give all the details here, but as it happens, there are not many to give. Strauss seems to have understood the Ideas as fundamental questions or problems rather than as final answers or better put, as eternal truths.[5] As he frequently repeats, Strauss defines philosophy as openness to the fundamental questions, but he never explains how we can identify questions as fundamental.[6] This is possible if and only if we have access to the foundation. But Strauss separates what the Greeks called the divine from the human; the only foundation to which he makes an extensive appeal is that of the pre-philosophical political life of the ancient Greeks, a foundation that he is careful to define as practical and not amenable to precise analysis or definition.

The Straussian revolution is therefore itself deeply dependent upon a rhetorical invocation of the noble. It is however not enough to say with Euripides: "I do not want these highbrow things. I want what the city needs."[7] As it happens, the noble is intrinsically highbrow, and I fail to see that the low brow of the conservative is superior to that of the liberal, in the contemporary political senses of

those terms. On the contrary, philosophy is more compatible with multiculturalism and infinite difference, or in other words, Athens, than it is with an Americanized version of Sparta, as is almost immediately visible in Strauss's writings. But the real problem lies deeper. Strauss sees, correctly, in my view, the great philosophical, and not merely the practical dangers of taking one's bearings by ontology. If one begins with Being, it is impossible to arrive at humanity. But if we take our start with the human things, then the divine is apparently relegated to the level of *nomos*. Strauss himself speaks both of an irresolvable tension between Athens and Jerusalem that defines the western tradition, and the final autonomy of reason from faith.[8] One has the impression that philosophy and religion are related as is the esoteric and the exoteric. Unfortunately, there is no clear access via discursive reason to the divine in either the Greek or the Biblical sense. The burden of the revolutionary return to the ancients must therefore be carried by *nomos* and faith. This cannot be what Strauss means when in *Natural Right and History* he associates with Socrates the view that "it is impossible to grasp the distinctive character of human things as such without grasping the essential difference between human things and the things which are not human, i.e., the divine or natural things."[9]

It is at this point that one sees the merits of the apparently bizarre Hegelian solution to the dilemmas of dualism. Strauss leaves us with a dualism of theory and practice, which is to be overcome, if at all, by a recourse to myths and prophetic surmises. But this is in no way an advance over Nietzsche. Because it is supported by the primacy of the practical, Strauss's appeal to the noble cannot provide a theoretical refutation of Heidegger. And its political consequences are no more aristocratic than are those of Nietzsche's myths of creation and destruction. In my opinion, the possibility of philosophy rests upon the dialectical overcoming of the split between theory and practice; but this in turn requires a conceptual analysis of the structure of intelligibility that Strauss not only does not give us, but which his own articulation of the nature of philosophy makes permanently inaccessible. Much as I sympathize with Straussian poetry, if his analysis is correct, then poetry wins its quarrel with

philosophy. The choice between, let us say, Homer and Dante is no longer a question of *logos*.

This brings me to my major criticism of Zuckert's book. She observes that Strauss has been accused of historicism and nihilism, and regularly defends him from these charges by saying that he both defines philosophy as a way of life and praises the Socratic way of life. But on the terms of Strauss's exoteric teaching, which Zuckert seems to believe is his genuine or "esoteric" teaching, political knowledge, i.e., knowledge of the ends of man, is independent of the knowledge of *the* whole (259) and so cannot be said to constitute genuine knowledge, despite the exoteric assurance that it does. Derrida is thus correct, on this basis, in saying that if we reject the notion of a natural order, it makes no sense to talk of human nature. In other words, the praise of the Socratic way of life makes sense as a contra-nihilistic celebration of philosophy if and only if Socrates' way of life is guided by or culminates in knowledge of what we may call here "the Ideas." Nothing contained in Strauss's exoteric teaching, and so of course in Zuckert's presentation of it or her criticism of Derrida, preserves Strauss from Derridean deconstruction. Strauss is on this analysis on a par with Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, and anyone else who claims that philosophy is a way of life but not a teaching. There are many ways of life, some (but not all) of which contradict each other on decisive points yet agree in calling themselves philosophical. If theoretical knowledge is impossible, and philosophy must be replaced either by poetry or by politics (which I take to be the rival alternatives offered by Zuckert's protagonists), then of course beings are *effectively* replaced by their poetic or political traces. Unless this criticism can be answered, it is Derrida rather than Strauss who turns out to be the hero, or the one who wins the heroine: not truth, but what Kojève called endless chatter. We are thus in dire need of Strauss's esoteric teaching, if indeed there is a golden apple within the silver filigree.

To conclude: I admire Zuckert's book, but am enough of a Hegelian to believe that the foundations must be made sufficiently visible to provide a basis for the construction of the city of man.

If this cannot be done, not only is philosophy impossible, but so too is the preservation of the difference between sane and insane politics.

Notes

1 This comment was delivered at a Symposium on *Postmodern Platos* held under the auspices of the Canadian Political Science Association, Ottawa, June 1998 [ed.].
2 See my *The Question of Being* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 160 f.
3 See my "Interpretation and the Fusion of Horizons," Chapter Eleven in *Metaphysics in Ordinary Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 182–201.
4 In *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, ed. T. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 29.
5 See "What is Political Philosophy?" in the collection of the same name (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959), p. 39, and the discussion in Victor Gourevitch, "Philosophy and Politics" in *Review of Metaphysics* (Vol. 22, no. 2: Dec., 1968), p. 300. Cf. Richard Kennington, "Strauss's Natural Right and History" in *Review of Metaphysics* (Vol. 35, no. 1: Dec., 1981), pp. 67–69.
6 See for example "Restatement on Tyranny" in *On Tyranny*, ed. Gourevitch and Roth (New York: Free Press, 1991), p.196.
7 Quoted in "Thucydides: The Meaning of Political history" in *Rebirth*, p. 73.
8 See for example "Jerusalem and Athens" in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, Ed. T. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 149 f.
9 Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, p. 112.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Absence of Structure

According to Jean Piaget, there are two characteristics common to the various formulations of Structuralism:[1] "on the one hand, an ideal or hopes of intrinsic intelligibility, based upon the postulate that a structure suffices to itself and does not require, in order to be grasped, recourse to all kinds of elements foreign to its nature; on the other hand, fulfillment, in the degree to which one has succeeded in reaching effectively certain structures, and where their utilization makes evident some general and apparently necessary characters which (those structures) present despite their variety." Piaget further clarifies this general observation by specifying as the three moments of structure "totality, transformation, and self-regulation."

Finally, structures can be formalised.[2] In short, structures are combinations of forms, possessing a systematic character, in that these combinations undergo transformations in accordance with rules exhibited by the structures themselves. By "intrinsic intelligibility" Piaget presumably means *total* intelligibility; if intelligibility is equated with structure, and structures are totally or intrinsically intelligible, then the totality of structures should be totally intelligible. Unfortunately, as we are reminded by the fact that structures may be formalised, this can be only a hope or ideal, given the intrinsic uncompletableness of the formalist program. The word "hopes" then warns us in advance that Structuralism, however rigorous or empirical its techniques and procedures, must also contain a philosophical or metaphysical component, and one to which no structures may correspond.

I do not know whether all those who call themselves Structuralists would be willing to accept Piaget's characterisation of their enterprise. Perhaps not, given the amorphousness of the movement; but it does seem to cover a reasonable proportion of those who call

themselves Structuralists today, including Lévi-Strauss, and those linguists who take their bearings by de Saussure on the one hand and mathematical logic on the other. In any event, it seems altogether permissible, in discussing a theoretical movement called Structuralism, to take one's bearings by the concept of structure, and this I propose to do. My purpose is to raise one or two questions about dangers implicit in Structuralism, understood approximately in the sense defined by Piaget. The largest part of my paper will be given over to a detailed analysis of certain aspects of the concept of structure. Its results, if valid at all, need not be restricted, but would presumably be also pertinent, to Structuralism. In the last portion of my paper, I shall make some general remarks, based on the results of the first section; and here I shall appeal directly to the last chapter of Levi-Strauss's *La pensée sauvage.*

As we have already noticed, a structure is a combination of forms; it would therefore seem that an analysis of structure presupposes an analysis of form. But one may easily see that, to the contrary, the analysis of form itself makes use of the concept of structure. Let me sketch the argument here. A form is a shape or pattern, literally, the "look" of a thing, which is shared by a number of things, and so which permits us to "divide and collect": i.e., to separate out the things of a given look, and to gather them together into a single family or class, which the look then *defines* in the double sense of dividing and collecting. Two questions immediately arise with respect to these looks. First: are they the looks of things, or the consequence of our looking at things? Second: how is one look distinguished from the other? In the immediate context, it is the second question which is of paramount importance.

We obviously distinguish, whether as discoverers or creators, between two looks or forms by virtue of their differences from each other. But the difference between F_1 and F_2 must reside within them individually, or in what I shall call their internal articulation. It makes no difference whether this internal articulation is supplied or discovered by the act of looking; in either case, the articulations must be sufficiently constant with respect to F_1 and F_2 that we can tell them apart in something other than a merely numerical sense.

As one might put it, the difference in the looks of F_1 and F_2 must be such as to define separate classes, and not simply separate members of the same class. If the differences are altogether arbitrary, or free poems of the act of looking, then there are no forms in the usual sense of the word, and certainly not in the sense relevant to Structuralism. To give the extreme consequence, the difference between F_1 and F_2 would not, under the previous circumstance, be determinably different from the difference between F_1 and F_n which is to say, as it were, that "difference makes no difference," or that everything is permitted; and thus we should establish, not Structuralism, but Nihilism. If the requirement that the difference between F_1 and F_2 be other than merely numerical requires any justification, it is readily supplied by looking at the symbols themselves. The difference between F_1 and F_2 lies, if we take them as tokens, in their subscripts: we can distinguish them only as distinct members of the class of F.

If we disregard the subscripts, one F looks (allowing for differences in orthography) so much like another as to be indistinguishable from it in a determinate or constant way. The F's reduce to points or reiterations of a formal monad. If there were nothing but F's (and so, no numbers to specify their distinct spatio-temporal co-ordinates), there would not even be forms, but simply one look, repeated indefinitely, or the One of Parmenides as it was disintegrated by classical atomism. The intelligibility of the subscripts, as a matter of fact, lies in their difference, not just from each other, but from the F's which they instantiate. Numbers are not just monads, but classes of monads; they differ from each other by virtue of internal articulation, and it is ultimately these differences which enable us to specify, if not indeed to perceive, the diversity of F's. The difference between F_1 and F_2 taken as tokens, is that of an internal articulation, defined by the difference between 1 and 2. I do not mean to suggest that this is the end of the story of the difference between F_1 and F_2. My point is rather that any two forms, however simple, can be distinguished or identified only by virtue of their *structures*. If a form lacks structure—for what else is an enduring internal articulation of self-identical and distinguishable formal elements?—then it is

invisible, either altogether, or as indistinguishable from some other form, of which it is now an instance.

If, then, a structure is a combination of forms, it is also true that form possesses structure. We may, of course, distinguish between structures in the sense pertinent to Structuralism, and forms, by assigning to structures qua combinations of forms properties which are denied to forms alone. But this is a decision of the intelligence or activity of looking, not altogether dissimilar to the activity of formalising structures, which we might perhaps call the activity of *construction*.[3] To say that X is a structure, whereas Y is a form, is at least in part a question of terminology. But even if we grant that there are natural differences between X and Y, corresponding to the differences customarily assigned by Structuralists to structures and forms, it should be obvious that one structure cannot be distinguished from another except by virtue of difference in their internal articulations. The articulated components may be of transformations as well as of forms, but the visibility of a transformation is dependent upon the visibility of the forms it covers; indeed, a transformation is itself a form, or, if you prefer, a structure of forms. Not merely, then, do forms possess structure, but structures possess form. The natural differences between X and Y are formal: they possess different looks. If we argue that some of the properties of these looks—e.g., transformation-rules—cannot be reduced to, or understood as, forms, then it must follow that they cannot be understood as structures (which, to repeat, possess form). And in this case, it would seem to follow that not merely the difference between structure and form, but between one structure and another, or the identity of *any* structure, and hence the meaning of the central conception of Structuralism, is not itself a structure. But then, is it not the case that the final stratum of intelligibility lies outside the domain of Structuralism, or that the claims made on behalf of Structuralism are, if not false, seriously defective?

Thus far, it seems, Structuralism as a theory concerns the following elements: structures and forms; the activity of looking at these structures and forms, within which we may include understanding them; and the hope (or ideal) of integral, i.e., comprehensive

intelligibility. It is no accident, given the historical antecedents of modern science, that Structuralism is curiously reminiscent of Platonism, in which the same elements play a central role: Ideas, *nous* or intellectual looking, and the hope that the cosmos is an intelligible whole. There is, however, so far as I can see, at least one decisive difference between Platonism and Structuralism. The Platonic Ideas are hierarchically ordered, or exhibit differences of excellence, and thereby contribute decisively (but not exclusively) to the difference between the noble and the base. In the extreme or comprehensive case, they contribute decisively to the reasonableness, not just of the hope that the cosmos is an intelligible whole, but to the desire to look at or know that whole. Structuralism, so far as I am acquainted with it, does not distinguish between the relative excellences of its structures, and it does not explain its hope as rational in any sense beyond that of an inductive generalisation from experience. In the last analysis, nothing is said about the habit of generalising upon inductions that is not itself an instance of such an induction. Structuralism does not explain as either rational or noble the desire to look at or understand the hopefully intelligible whole.

I shall return later to this comparison between Structuralism and Platonism, which I mention here simply as an indication of the general conclusion toward which my particular analyses are being directed. Meanwhile, we must continue with our analysis of the concept of structure. Permit me to mention the etymology of the word, which comes from the Latin *struo, struxi, structum*: to join together, build, arrange, or order. *Struo* is related to *sterno*, and thence to the Greek *stornymi*: to spread smooth or level. Taken etymologically, a structure is an "orderly spread," an arrangement of connected parts, constituting a smooth or level unity of a manifold.[4] These etymologies seem to suggest that structures are constructions rather than discoveries, but this may well be due to the pragmatic nature of early linguistic formation, rather than to any ontological truth. In any case, the difficulty for us is a different one: regardless of whether it is nature or man (or God) who is responsible for our "spreads," there is an ambiguity in the notion of "orderliness," suggested in the etymology by the term "smooth."

My reference to the etymology of "structure" is not intended in any playful sense. It seems especially important, when discussing a theory that, like modern science generally, believes itself to have subordinated history to mathematics, to emphasise the role of history in the analysis of the meaning of terms. Whatever the ontological status of primitive linguistic use, it plays a decisive role in shaping the horizon of later speech-habits. The neglect of history, whether in favor of mathematical formalism or contemporary ordinary use, leads all too frequently in our time to conceptual slovenliness disguised as conceptual rigor. In the immediate case, the history of ordinary language is an indispensable dimension in the dissection of the ordinary origins of extraordinary terms. The word "ordinary" is in many ways the decisive case. Ordinary language is ordinary in the precise sense of ordering our discourse. It is, or claims to be, the standard by which we regulate discourse, or distinguish between proper and improper *forms* of speech. It thus claims for itself a political function analogous to the role given by the Socratic philosophers to prudential intelligence. The ordinal (in the political as well as theoretical sense) property of ordinary language derives from an underlying notion of structure. Ordinary language claims to be a "smooth or level spread," in terms of which we may smooth out irregularities (violations of the *nomos*) in discourse. Unfortunately, however, there seem to be rough as well as smooth patches within the continuum of ordinary discourse. Whether this means that there are rough as well as smooth forms, or that ordinary discourse is discontinuous, the rough patches corresponding to formlessness, is not quite clear. Differently stated, the concept of "smoothness," which is decisive for the meaning of structure in general and ordinary language in particular, would itself seem to be a rough rather than a smooth patch.

The answers to questions like "what is smooth?" or "what is ordinal?" can thus not be acquired by pointing to one set of structures rather than another, since what counts as a structure, or at least which structures count as regulative, is itself dependent upon what we mean by "smooth" and "ordinal." Smoothness, like clarity and distinctness, is a subjective term.[5] In saying this, I do not

mean to deny that there are natural or objective structures. What I do mean to deny is the view that the distinction between ordinal and non-ordinal Structures is itself a structure. *Structures are not self-regulative.* Furthermore, in calling "smoothness" a subjective term, I do not mean to give it a pejorative or insubstantial sense. My point is just this: structures are relative to, or regulated by, consciousness or intelligence, and intelligence is not a structure. Let me try to make this a bit more precise. Regardless of whether structures are primarily discovered or constructed (= projected, created), what *counts* as a structure in a given context, and in both the cardinal and ordinal senses of counting, depends upon the intentions, ends, or values of intelligence. If these intentions are themselves reduced to structures, then we generate an infinite regress. For intention-structures are themselves smooth or rough by the standard of some other intention, which, *ex hypothesi,* is, as intelligible, identical with or reducible to its own structure, *ad infinitum.*

The results of my analysis thus far may be restated as follows. It makes no sense to talk of the analysis of structure, if by "analysis" we mean merely the replacement of one structure by another.[6] In addition to what I have just said about an infinite regress, the matter may be put by a reflection upon the etymology of "analysis." The Greek word *analysis* means a "spreading out" by means of a loosening or dissolving, which may be characterised as an "upward" motion, but perhaps rather by a pervasion into all directions or dimensions. If a structure is an orderly, smooth or level spread (or if structures are legitimate or illegitimate depending upon whether they are smooth or rough), then what counts as a "smooth spread" depends upon the activity of spreading out, or differentiating in the sense of providing smooth patches within, the continuum of intelligibility.[7] Nor does this necessarily mean that structures are essentially projections or creations. It might be, for example, that structures are natural whereas smoothness and roughness are properties of looking at, or interpreting the significance of, structures. Or perhaps what counts as a structure to the active intelligence is an interpretation of some more fundamental stratum of reality. In any event, the notion of smoothness is again common to the

notions of analysis and structure. It is not the case that analysis in itself determines structure, or even that structure determines analysis; rather, smoothness determines, or participates essentially in the determination of, both analysis and structure. And what counts as "smooth" cannot be analysed into structure.

I should like to put this last conclusion in another way. Let us consider the relationship between a structure and its meaning, and assume, as do so many linguists and linguistic philosophers, that the meaning is itself a linguistic expression. Since according to the thesis of Structuralism structures may be formalised, the previous assumption is equivalent to the view that logical forms, taken as the expression of meaning, are linguistic expressions. If the meaning of logical form is itself detachable from that form and a linguistic expression, then it obviously has a formal structure which may again be formalised; for if it does not, then meaning, contrary to the thesis of Structuralism, is not a structure. If, however, it does, then we are faced by an infinite regress of form possessing meaning possessing form, etc., and the meaning will never be accessible. Now assume that meaning is not detachable from logical form, which, to repeat, is a linguistic expression. Then each such expression, as a form, must be formally distinguishable from every other form. Let us designate the form as F. But if I ask the question "what is the meaning of F?" and refer to the natural structure which F designates, then there must be a distinction between the linguistic expression F′ which contains the reply to my question, and F as the formalisation of the natural structure for whose meaning I asked. This distinction cannot be one like the distinction between use and mention; what we now have are two different forms. Neither can the answer to the question, "what is the meaning of F?" be simply "F"; for in that case it would be impossible to state the difference between F_1 and F_2 except by reiteration. The inadequacy of this procedure is easily tested by showing the forms to someone who does not just grasp their meaning, and has to be taught the difference between the two. In other words, the identification of the meaning of the form as identical with the form assumes that understanding is immediate intuition, or takes place in silence prior to speech.

I shall return to this explanation in a few moments. But meanwhile, even if it were true that understanding occurs as silent intuition, it is not true that explanation occurs in that way. The identification of form and meaning is thus tantamount to the denial for the necessity of explanation, a denial which I suggest is empirically unjustified if not logically absurd.

The thesis that meaning and form are identical thus leaves us a prey to the following situation. When asked for the meaning of F, one man may say F and another not-F. How is the student to decide between these two answers if he does not just *see* it? But even if there could be some way in which to distinguish between F = F and F = not-F, that way, as meaningful, would itself be a linguistic expression, and so subject to the same problems as the forms which we initially asserted. And whether meaning and form are separable or detachable, the meaning cannot be a linguistic expression. I conclude that the meaning of a structure is not itself a structure. In order to elucidate this conclusion, I should like to introduce a technical term: *detachment*. "Detachment" may be indirectly defined as *the absence of structure*. I have been arguing toward the conclusion that structures are intelligible because of the characteristic of detachment. One structure is detached from another; the meanings of structures are detached from the structures themselves; and now, to introduce a new point, structures and meanings are each detached from intelligence or mind. The third point is sufficiently different from the first two to require a separate discussion. I argue, therefore, that intelligence is identical with neither structure nor meaning. It cannot be a structure in any finally determinate sense, because the function of intelligence is to apprehend and evaluate structures. In old-fashioned but very relevant language, the mind is the "form of forms" precisely because it has no form of its own. As Aristotle put it, the mind (he says "psyche") "becomes somehow" the beings in the world because of its openness or receptivity with respect to these forms.[8] One could not "change his mind" if the mind were structurally fixed. If changing one's mind be defined as a capacity to transform structures present in or as the mind, then this capacity is obviously not itself a structure. Or if we take a Kantian position,

and argue that the mind produces the structures it looks at, and that this productive capacity itself is structured, the conclusion is no different. The Kantian intelligence is no more reducible to the "structures" of the transcendental ego than is the Aristotelian mind to *noēsis* and *dianoia*. In both cases, the structures are expressions designating functions of a higher unity, which Kant in fact calls the transcendental unity of apperception. The mind "takes shape" *qua* noetic activity in the sense that we cannot grasp its functions without assigning structure to them. But again, the act of "taking shape" is not itself a structure.

Perhaps it is not misleading to say that the mind is prior to its structures in something like the way that, for some linguists, the linguistic system is prior to its elements, or the capacity to speak a language is prior to learning—or speaking—structures of that language.[9] In any case, as I understand the situation, the phenomenon of intelligence depends upon a detachment from the formal structures it apprehends (including those structures by which it apprehends itself). To understand a structure is to "be" it in the sense of incorporating or comprehending it, but as an element other than the agent of comprehension. Noetic detachment is thus the non-geometrical "space" within which the mind incorporates and ejects structures, within which we change our minds, and thereby discern ourselves as so engaged, or as different from the various differences we entertain. If the mind were a structure, it could know (and formalise) itself. But the activity (or passivity) of knowing itself would at the same time be a transcendence of or detachment from itself. The act of knowing could not be simply identical with what is known. For let S designate noetic structure. If the act of knowing S were the same as the state of being S, then there would be no difference between saying "S" and "I know S." Knowledge, or the meaning of knowledge, would be unspeakable. This may well be true for the divine *noēsis noēseōs*, but human intelligence, as I noted above, is discursive as well as intuitive. Perhaps my fundamental thesis is this: if I cannot say what I know, whether to myself or someone else, then my silence is indistinguishable from ignorance. I do not deny at all that there are many sources of knowledge,

such as hunches, intuitions, revelations, moods, and the like. If the heart has its reasons which the reason does not know, the heart must nevertheless be prepared to explain to itself what those reasons are. In so doing, however, it will make those reasons accessible to reason. In order to know, in the active sense of having something in and present to my mind (whether as supplied by the heart or some other organ), I must know that I know. I must be able to answer the question "what is S?" As Spinoza pointed out, this is not the same as generating an infinite regress; the moment I answer the question "what is S?" I have demonstrated to myself that to know is equivalent to knowing that I know. But this equivalence is altogether compatible with the assertion that to know is to transcend or be detached from what one knows, even if one is knowing oneself. For an equivalence is not an identity; knowing that I know is not identical to knowing. If knowing were the same as being, one would, in knowing, entail that one knows that he knows, which is to say that the identity of knowing and being could be achieved only at the price of detachment from itself. In sum, I know that I know only when I give an account, and the act of giving an account is not the same as the state of being a structure. In speaking of myself, I detach myself from what I am. And this, again, is the difference between God and man: God is what He is, whereas man is both what he is and what he is not.

For similar reasons, the mind cannot be identical with the meaning of a structure. The meaning of a structure, although detached from it in the special sense I have given that term, and hence not itself a determinate structure, is nevertheless *determinable* over an indefinite range of variations. If I ask, "what is the meaning of structure S?" and you know, then you can tell me; that is, you can express the meaning in a linguistic or symbolic form. *What* you tell me is of course detached since, for reasons which need not be reiterated, the meaning of S is not identical with the sentences you have uttered in conveying or expressing that meaning. But the fact that you can answer my question (and that your answer is subject to a variety of obvious and effective tests) is proof enough that the meaning of S is "determinable": i.e., it can be captured in the net of language,

and hence, it must have a nature, even if that nature be quasi-Protean. On my view, then, meanings are natural rather than conventional entities, but they are not structures. The structure we give to meaning is conventional, contingent or constructive, but the meaning is not; in the same sense, theoretical linguists distinguish between the "formal units" or "expression-elements" of a language, and their "substantial realization" as sounds and letters.[10] The combinatorial and contrastive functions of the formal units argue for a self-identical being, which we may take as an example of how one may conceive of the distinction between meaning and structure.

We have now seen, from a somewhat different angle than earlier, that even if in the case of mind the act of knowing were identical with the state of being, what one would know, and hence be in at least part (and an essential part) of one's being, is not a structure, but the meaning of a structure. The difference between meaning and structure is then proof (on this hypothesis) that mind is not structure. But I am saying something in addition to that. I am now denying that mind is identical with the meanings it knows. My reason is the aforementioned determinability of meanings. If a meaning has a nature, as it must have in order to be the meaning of a given structure, then that nature must possess a unity analogous to the transcendental unity of apperception which Kant attributes to mind. But the unity of any given meaning cannot be identical with the transcendental unity of apperception for reasons which are parallel to those by which I have denied that mind could be identical with any given structure (including its own, if it has one). The transcendental unity of apperception, as the "unity of unities," must comprehend them all, actually or potentially; it must be able to entertain them *seriatim.* To employ a term from Hegel's logic, the universality of the potential discourse of the mind is *disjunctive.* But I infer from this the non-Hegelian conclusion that mind is not identical with the sum of meanings it disjunctively entertains.

As George Lukács has said with respect to Hegel, "even though the content of knowledge be referred back to the knowing subject, the act of knowing does not thereby lose its externalized character."[11] If I may appropriate and reformulate these words, the process

of self-knowledge is equivalent to the process of self-detachment. What Hegel called "the identity of identity and non-identity" is thus an equivocation upon the term "identity," which refers in the first instance to self-consciousness, or the transcendental unity of apperception, and in the second instance to the logical property. If the self-conscious spirit or mind were identical with the logical property of identity, then it would exclude non-identity. (Hegel of course interprets this exclusion as a relation of inclusion or sublation, but he does so by virtue of his identification of the logical terms with spirit or mind, which is to assume what he needs to prove.) "The identity of identity and non-identity" is a synonym for the mind's perpetual self-detachment; that is, its difference, as apprehending intelligence, from the differences it comprehends. I mention in passing that, for reasons like this, I believe both the Hegelian and Marxist analysis of alienation and objectification to be erroneous. But that is surely another story.

I introduced the term "detachment" with the remark that it may be indirectly understood as the absence of structure. As I trust is also evident, I am very far from wishing to denigrate the concept of structure in asserting that the intelligibility of structure turns upon the absence of structure. Nor have I by any means exhausted the examples by which this thesis could have been defended. But it does seem to me that my examples are central to a critical discussion about the significance of Structuralism. I should like now to connect the results of my analysis of structure to the previously introduced comparison between Structuralism and Platonism. This will enable me to raise my questions about Structuralism in a more general context. I noted above that Structuralism contains three essential elements which have striking counterparts in Platonism: structures or forms, the activity of looking, and the ideal or hope of integral, i.e., total or comprehensive, intelligibility. Thus far I have emphasized the concepts of structure and noetic looking; it will now be profitable to take our bearings by the component of hope. In order to set the stage, I should like to quote one of my favorite fragments from Heraclitus: "If one does not hope, he will not find the unhoped-for, since it is not to be found and inaccessible."[12] Heraclitus suggests

that philosophical hope has an illuminative function: it lights up for the eye of reason what would otherwise be invisible. Fundamentally the same conception is to be found in the Platonic dialogues, as for example in association with the doctrine of Eros. Eros is, or is related to, a striving for completion or wholeness which "opens the horizon" (to use a Heideggerian phrase) for reason, and makes possible the divine madness by which reason is directed upward toward the Ideas. Philosophical truth, or truth which is not negated by a skeptical dialectic, but which is sustained by the divine gift of comprehensive, synoptic vision, depends upon the Eros which is not just appetite but Plato's version of Heraclitean hope.

It is easy to see the similarity between philosophical hope and religious faith; possible, I think, but far from easy, to articulate the difference between the two. For the present, I am more concerned with the similarities. When the man of faith says *credo quia absurdum*, what he is actually telling us, I think, is that the apparent absurdity of belief, when measured by the standard of pagan reason, is actually a source of illumination, which renders visible and intelligible, the context of reason which is not itself accessible to reason. In these terms, it is reason which is absurd in judging faith to be absurd. The *quia* or "because" indicates that the man of faith has by no means jettisoned reason. But the key to his teaching lies in a proper understanding of the double sense of absurdity. Absurdity in the honorific sense is the trans-rational dimension of faith, something like the hope that structure will be explained by the absence of structure. The man of little faith, or little hope, thus lacks the capacity to see into the dark, and so, he is unable to distinguish between light and dark. Light and dark disappear into the interminable grey of the "bad infinity" or a continuously self-negating dialectic.

In a very obvious sense, modern science, and so Structuralism, is a descendant of Platonism. The emphasis upon form, total intelligibility, and the mathematical or quasi-mathematical properties of form and explanation, make this descent evident. But it may be argued that modern science shares in the Judaeo-Christian tradition as well: the contingency or mutability of nature, or rather the interpretation of the world as created rather than natural, and the

conception of man as struggling with God for mastery of the world, play an important role in the "infrastructure" of science. It would be possible to view the history of science as a dialectical interaction between these two sources, within which philosophy struggles to secularise religion, and religion to historicise the mathematical forms of philosophy. With respect to the phenomenon of hope, the situation as I understand it is something like this. For the Platonist, the context of formal structures is not itself a formal structure. In the Platonic dialogues, the three great wholes of cosmos, psyche and polis are always discussed, as wholes, in the language of *mythos* rather than *logos* or discursive, demonstrative reason. The context of reason, whether the latter be understood in its theoretical or practical manifestations, is myth rather than history. The radically non-historical character of Platonism may be illustrated by the fact that its myths orient themselves regularly in terms of the past rather than the future. The function of the Platonic myth, however, is in no sense antiquarian. It is designed to express the unity within the manifold of existential or temporal events, by tracing them back to their *origins*, and by this I mean their natural or ontological origins. From this perspective, the function of the Platonic myths is identical with that of Platonic Ideas: to provide stability, unity, and intelligibility, each in their appropriate domains. The myths may thereby be described, tentatively and cautiously, as reason exploring its detachment from itself.

Since the function of myth is to make accessible the unstructured context of structure, it is obvious that the meaning of myth cannot correspond to, let alone be identical with, a structure or structures. Nevertheless, as "recollections" of the origins in a natural or ontological sense, they are reasonable speeches about the reasonableness of the whole—about the ideal of total intelligibility. (It should be parenthetically noted that even when the myths assure us that the whole is *not* altogether intelligible, this is a form of reasoning about the whole: a poetic anticipation of Gödel's theorem, if I may put it that way.) They therefore differ sharply from the Judaeo-Christian revelation in two decisive respects. First, the religious revelation, despite interpretations to which it has been subjected

by philosophers and heretics, is intended to speak of actual events. Second, it takes its bearings by the future rather than the past: the meaning of creation will not be revealed until the coming, or the second coming, of the Messiah. In these two senses, revelation is historical as Platonic myth is not. Strictly speaking, I should think it inaccurate to refer to the Scriptural revelations as "myths"; unless, that is, one has already rejected them. But furthermore, revelation is "absurd" or non-rational, in contrast to the intended reasonableness of the Platonic myths. A moment ago I described the Platonic myth as reason exploring its detachment from itself. But this is to say that the reason or intelligence of the whole is essentially, i.e., naturally or ontologically, the same as the intelligence of the parts. In the case of revelation, on the contrary, there is an absolute transcendence of God from His creation, which is not overcome but emphasized by the revelation itself, If we bear in mind the two senses of the concept of absurdity, then we may be amenable to the suggestion that revelation is absurd as philosophy is not. I mention in passing that, for the Platonist, a philosophy of absurdity is itself an absurdity in the pejorative sense, since it has totally forgotten the difference between philosophy and religion, to the disadvantage of both.

With these remarks in mind, let me turn in conclusion to the main points of Lévi-Strauss's critique of Sartre, in the final chapter of *La pensée sauvage*. In a very superficial sense, it would seem to be the case that Lévi-Strauss is a philosopher and Sartre an apostle of revelation. Sartre insists upon history as the horizon of total intelligibility, whereas Lévi-Strauss is an advocate of myth. But Lévi-Strauss's conception of both history and myth differs sharply from the religious and the Platonic conceptions. He sees very well that, in order to understand history, it is necessary to leave it (347).[13] On the other hand, he has not distinguished very carefully between the historical and the natural (a characteristic of modern science and philosophy), as is evident from his discussion of what a "truly total history" would be like (340–41). Lévi-Strauss takes history, as total, to include everything, which is tantamount to the historicization of nature, or more specifically, of rational, scientific structure. Of course, he vacillates, or seems to vacillate, on this crucial point.

For example, he rejects the equivalence between the notion of history and that of humanity (347). But the point of this rejection is to deny the pre-eminence of history as a science among the other sciences. In a deeper sense, Lévi-Strauss is a historicist, as is reflected in the following passage: "[History] consists entirely in its method, which experience proves is indispensable for inventorying the integrality of the elements of any given structure, human or non-human. Very far then from the search for intelligibility's terminating in history as in its point of arrival, it is rather history which serves as the point of departure for each quest for intelligibility. Thus, as one says of certain careers, history leads everywhere, but upon condition of leaving it" (347–8).

The access to intemporality, which Lévi-Strauss attributes to the savage mind, and by extension to the scientist or Structuralist, is thus an abstraction from historicity, in a sense similar to Heidegger's interpretation of "rest" as a "tarrying" in or limit-case of motion (not radically different from the limit of modern calculus). To the modern mind, rest is a state of motion; Lévi-Strauss, who is not a savage but a modern scientist, surrenders the savage mentality in the very act of defending it. If history provides us with an inventory of the totality or integrity of the elements of the structure, then the integrity of the structure, the structure *qua* structure, is provided by history. It is itself a historical creation or event. It may thus be said that Lévi-Strauss advocates the stepping outside of history in the same paradoxical if not self-contradictory sense that Nietzsche tells us: whoever would understand *Zarathustra* must have one foot beyond life (and so, beyond the world).[14] The same point emerges from Lévi-Strauss's observation that the role of dialectical reason is constituting (325), i.e., that it gives possession to the human sciences of a reality which the latter could not otherwise obtain, but which it must then decompose in order to recompose its elements in accordance with a different plan (331). Although Lévi-Strauss attributes the principle of dialectic to the savage mind, as an intended rebuke to Sartre (324), the consequence is to historicize mythical thinking.

To speak of dialectic as *constituting* already suggests that, for Lévi-Strauss, the structures of myth are human creations. Of course,

we must not overlook the Kantian component in Lévi-Strauss's thinking: what he calls the "objective psychic structure" presupposed by praxis (349) is in some sense analogous to the structure of the transcendental ego. But there is nothing comparable, so far as I can see, to the transcendental unity of apperception in Lévi-Strauss's teaching. The stability of objectivity is a function of the context of structure; and this must also be true for psychic structure. In other words, whereas for Kant, the transcendental ego is eternal or non-constituted, and in a non-mythical sense, Lévi-Strauss makes history the engine of mythical dialectic, and thereby negates the transcendental features of his thought. The "plan" in accordance with which analytical reason must recompose the dissolved elements of dialectical reality, although not so identified by Lévi-Strauss, is obviously itself dialectical. Thus, Lévi-Strauss gives the end of science in three steps: to dissolve man, not to constitute him; to reintegrate culture into nature; and to reintegrate life into the ensemble of its physico-chemical conditions (326–27). Lévi-Strauss does not seem to understand that one cannot dissolve man reasonably except in accord with a plan which is not itself the product of a prior dissolution. The end and plan of science look suspiciously like the end and plan of positivism. But Lévi-Strauss, if he is a positivist, is an advocate of *edifying* positivism. He emphasizes that he is not a vulgar materialist, and that the reintegration of life into material nature means the enrichment of the latter rather than the debasement of the former: the replacement of a less by a more understood complexity rather than the reduction of the higher to the lower (328).

I must confess that I am not myself edified by Lévi-Strauss's conception of enriched matter, in which life seems to me to serve the function of fertilizer. But let this pass; the important point here is the epistemological and ontological status of the plan or ideal of reintegration. According to Lévi-Strauss, wisdom for man consists in understanding, not simply that his life, which takes place in history, is a myth, but that it is a transient or historical myth (338). Lévi-Strauss also regularly emphasizes that there is no hierarchy of excellence among myths: one is as good as another (330, 341, 342). Even where this is not explicitly stated, it is implicit in his entire

procedure, which regularly denies the superiority of civilized to savage thought, even occasionally at the price of blurring the difference between science and magic (33 ff.). It is clear from his acceptance of the epithet "aesthete," in the Sartrean sense of one who studies men as though they were ants (326).[15] And it is clear from his very conception of a structure, with its emphasis upon systematization, classification, and formalism. In short, as I noted earlier, Lévi-Strauss's structures differ from the Platonic Ideas in that they possess *only* mathematical or quasi-mathematical properties. And the mathematics is that of Stevin, Vieta, and Descartes, not of Pythagoras. The structures of Structuralism are "value-free" or significatively homogeneous: rational islands afloat in a sea of nonrational or historicized myth.

The difference between the Platonic and the Structuralist conception of structure thus has an essential influence upon the difference between the two conceptions of myth. I believe we can say that the Structuralist conception is at bottom a secularised or atheistic version of the religious conception of history. As an urbane or sophisticated savage—one is almost tempted to say a Parisian *bricoleur*—Lévi-Strauss reminds us somehow of the "demythologizers" mentioned in Plato's *Phaedrus*, who teach a boorish wisdom, namely that mythical events and beings are explicable in terms of natural science or mathematical physics.[16] But Lévi-Strauss is too citified to be a boor or rustic, and so he remythologizes, both consciously and unconsciously, his "boorish wisdom" of enriched matter with a denatured version of *mythos*. I hope I shall not be taken as denying the interest and value of much of Lévi-Strauss's work, or indeed, as pretending to a greater expertise concerning it than I in fact possess. For the very specific reasons that I have been giving in this essay, the comprehensive theoretical result, as it emerges in *La pensée sauvage*, is to my mind a deliciously flavored skepticism of the Nietzschean variety—too delicious, and so less satisfying or penetrating than Nietzsche.

Thus I very much appreciate Lévi-Strauss's emphasis upon objective or timeless structures. But as opposed both to the Platonic conception of myth, and the Marxist-Hegelian conception of the

continuously revelatory nature of history, Lévi-Strauss's myths seem to me to be discontinuous poems or perspectives, very appropriately symbolised by the row of broken lines which he uses to represent interpretations of periods of history (345). His geometrical structures are similarly fractured and disintegrated by the self-contradictory character of their mythical context: an eternity of temporal creation. If myth is reason exploring its detachment from itself, Lévi-Strauss's myth exhibits, for all the elegance of his rhetoric (and of his imagination, as for example in the passages on the naming of birds, cows, dogs and horses), the sterility of a conception of reason based finally upon mathematics alone. The situation is directly comparable to another late descendant of Platonism, Husserlian phenomenology, and its analysis of the context of structures known as the *Lebenswelt*. After showing brilliantly how our perception of the life-world has been sedimented over by the consequences of modern mathematical physics, Husserl proceeds to articulate the discontinuous structures of the continuous and therefore ultimately unstructured unity of human *doxa*, the practical counterpart to the transcendental unity of apperception, by precisely the same Galilean-Newtonian, mathematicized reason which he had previously held responsible for our loss of perception.

I mention phenomenology—and indeed, only an aspect of it—simply as a second example of a very instructive consequence of the fate of Platonism in its dialectical struggle, during the course of western civilization, with the religion of revelation. As both grow old, they are exhausted, not merely by their mutual conflict, but by the mere passage of time. The delicate balance of opposites, the fragile harmony between mathematics and poetry in Platonism; the capacity to preserve the double sense of absurdity necessary for the man of faith if he is to live without alienation in two worlds: these are gradually brutalised, and tragically enough, often by the finest fruits of the two traditions themselves. Hope hardens first into pride; then the sclerotic rage of the will to power; finally, the vulgar and nihilistic positivism of the last men, with its slogans of hardware, hard sciences, and hard-headedness. Faith in its turn decays into fanaticism; then, as if exhausted by the requisite expenditure

of energy, into the love of myth, which is gradually replaced by the love of remythologizing, or a condition indistinguishable from the ideology of the "boorish wisdom" it presumably opposes. With the death of hope and faith, we are no longer in a position to respond reasonably to the absence of structure; and this incapacity, accelerated by the fantastic increase in our mathematical and scientific capacities, leaves a vacuum which is today being filled by the vaticinations of Heidegger, or far worse, outright madness.

This essay has not been written in a spirit of anger with the modern or contemporary world, and certainly not with Lévi-Strauss or Structuralism. I have merely attempted to set out, in a specific and general way, what my own reservations or questions are with respect to the enterprise known as Structuralism. If I might summarise these reservations for the last time, I would say that, just as the meaning of a structure cannot itself be a structure, neither is mind or intelligence. The context of structure is finally structureless (a point, I suppose, at which Plato, revealed religion, and Heidegger are actually in agreement), however many its determinabilities. The problem of science, or rather of a genuine philosophy of science, is to find a way, analogous to the rational myths of Platonism, to speak coherently about the non-geometrical "space" of detachment between structure and meaning, a way which will preserve the reasonableness, and therefore the nobility, of the scientific enterprise.

Notes

1 This paper was presented at a conference on structuralism held during August, 1970, at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California [ed.].
2 *Le Structuralisme* (P. U. F., Paris, 1968), pp. 6–7.
3 Cf. Piaget, *Le Structuralisme*, p. 60.
4 Cf. my book, *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969; Reprint with the Preface to the Portuguese Translation: South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2000).
5 Cf. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1951), Bd. II, p.254.
6 That this is what Lévi-Strauss means by scientific analysis is evident from *La pensée sauvage* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962), p. 328, a passage which I shall discuss later in this essay.

7 Cf. Rosen, *Nihilism*, pp. 51 ff.
8 *De Anima* 431b21. For a discussion of this issue in a way related to the present paper, cf. my article "Thought and Touch: a Note on Aristotle's *De Anima*," in: *Phronesis*, Vol. VI, No.2, 1961; reprinted in *The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 119–126.
9 Cf. Oswald Ducrot, "Le structuralisme en linguistique," in: *Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme?*, ed. F. Wahl (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1968), pp. 35–36 and 42–43.
10 Cf. John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 58 ff.
11 In the Preface to the new edition of *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, in: *Werke*, Bd. II (Neuwied: Luchterhand Verlag, 1968), p. 25.
12 Diels, *Fragment* 18.
13 Numbers in parentheses refer henceforward to pages in the previously cited book by Lévi-Strauss.
14 *Ecce Homo*, in: *Werke*, ed. K. Schlechta, Bd. II, p. 1074, par. 3.
15 Cf. Plato's *Sophist*, 227a7–c6.
16 For a brief discussion of this point, see my paper, "The Non-Lover in Plato's Phaedrus," in: *Man and World*, Vol. 2, No. 3, August, 1969; reprinted in *The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry*, pp. 78–90.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Review of Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy *by Carl Page (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995)*

The aim of this elegantly written book is to preserve what the author calls "the meaning of historicity" without abandoning "either the spirit or the tradition of First Philosophy" (xii). The two technical terms in this opening statement of intention evidently point us in opposite directions toward Aristotle in the latter instance and 19th and 20th century historicism in the former. Uneasy bedfellows, one would think. Will they awaken each other from their dogmatic slumbers, and if so, to the harmony of dialogue or the cacophony of each other's worst nightmare? Let us begin our investigation by attempting to locate the standpoint from which the author has not simply formulated his task but from which he envisions its successful completion.

In his initial clarification of First Philosophy, Carl Page evokes the Aristotelian notion of the knowledge of first causes and principles. The ideals of First Philosophy are "primacy, universality, and comprehensiveness. More colloquially put, First Philosophy aims at getting to the bottom of everything" (3). Instead of defining historicity by contrast, Page shifts without comment to "philosophical historicism," which "foreswears the realization of all theoretical and practical ideals that hold out some hope for the actual transcendence of the *hic et nunc* or the transfiguration of mortality" (*ibid.*). From the immediate context, it is evident that historicism is the interpretation of historicity; perhaps one could say that the former is the philosophical doctrine whereas the latter is the technical name for the nature of human existence that is asserted by the doctrine.

Since the bulk of the book is directed to a critical examination of various schools of historicism, there is no sustained and detailed account of First Philosophy. We come to understand what this expression means to Page by inference from his dissection of the historicism that challenges its legitimacy. That dissection isolates three varieties of historicism and one type that is sufficiently peculiar to belong to a different if related species. The three varieties as Page develops them from a somewhat different nomenclature (42–44) are sociology (21–46), pragmatism (47–56), and hermeneutics (57–67). Mannheim is perhaps the most important representative of sociological historicism in Page's account. Gadamer is the preeminent spokesman for hermeneutical historicism, and pragmatism is divided into two sub-species, conciliatory (Bernstein, Margolis) and ironic (Rorty: 68–79).

The distinct species to which I referred above contains two subspecies, Hegel and Heidegger. They belong to a different species from the other characters in Page's drama because of their greater depth and in Hegel's case at least, because historicism is overcome by the ascent to the absolute standpoint (163) or as Page also puts it, by furnishing the "proper metaphysical context for appreciating historicist intuitions" (158). This survey of full and partial historicists constitutes the bulk of the book under review; there is however a pivotal third chapter that comes in the exact middle of the treatment of historicism proper and historicism metaphysical (or post-metaphysical). Appropriately enough, as a central element in his own critique of the weaknesses of historicism, one finds in this middle chapter Page's discussion of Leo Strauss, the master of the middle.

There is much to appreciate in Page's analysis of the historicists in the full sense of the term, but he is himself primarily interested in philosophical historicism, and I want to emphasize this aspect of his book. Here are the two axioms that he attributes to philosophical historicism: (I) "The axiom of contingent historical contextualization" which asserts the contingency of all frameworks within which we attempt to understand the truth or to be doing the good. (II) "The axiom of reason's finite historicity"

or the assertion that human understanding possesses finite powers because it is determined "by the contingent, historical nature of human existence" (80). I am not persuaded that these axioms are actually distinct, but they are not obscure and they express Page's point successfully.

Let us now look briefly at Page's crucial objections to philosophical historicism, which are to be found in the aforementioned middle chapter 3. On his way toward formulating these objections, Page notes that historicists often contradict themselves by attributing an absolute validity to the historicist thesis as in the claim that all truth is historically relative. He then offers what he calls a contradiction-free version of the historicist thesis: "It cannot be ahistorically *known* by human beings that there is no ahistorical knowledge for human beings" (96; see also 110). If I understand this assertion correctly, it is equivalent to the assertion that human beings cannot achieve the standpoint of eternity from which they might exclude the possibility of ahistorical (= eternal) knowledge. But this surely contradicts the historicist thesis both directly and indirectly. Directly, because "it cannot be known that *X*" is equivalent to the universal assertion of the unknowability of *X*. Indirectly, because the possibility of ahistorical knowledge is left open. Page seems to have noticed this when he says that "the universal idiom of this entailment" is "hidden in the 'cannot'" but I found his exposition too oblique to follow with any certainty. What he calls the contradiction-free version of the historicist thesis seems rather to be an assertion of the openness of the ahistorical thesis.

More important, however, the ostensibly non-contradictory version of historicism is too weak to capture the claims of philosophical historicism as Page encapsulates them in his own axioms. This becomes entirely clear in a slightly later passage (110) where Page gives the non-contradictory version of historicism as an assertion of a supposition, that is, the supposition, but not the "universal knowledge," that human understanding is contingent, finite, or historical. On the same page, we are told that even given these weaker or non-self-contradictory versions of the doctrine, "the philosophical historicist, as the one picturing the scenario to himself,

does not even have the right to the universal idiom that is one of its defining features." I take this to mean that philosophical historicism is by definition the assertion of a universal claim; and it is this claim that Page proceeds to refute.

Or rather, I should say that he continues to refute, since previously, with respect to Gadamer, he has correctly noted that historicists who appeal to the experience of history even while rejecting universalism commit historicism "to a form of revelation" (107). In general, I think it is fair to say that Page regularly denies the ability of philosophical historicism to formulate its thesis without invoking a self-vitiating universality. For example, historicists interpret human finitude as what Page calls "inevitable parochiality." But universality is already contained within the term "inevitable" (112). At least as important, if not more so, are two subsequent criticisms leveled against historicism. First, historicist inquiry is itself a manifestation of the pursuit of truth, a pursuit that makes no sense if we assume from the start that truth is intrinsically unavailable, i.e., that what is actually available is a historically contingent opinion (122 f). Second, historicism has no critical way in which to discriminate between better and worse, even though it acknowledges that distinction, most tellingly in the priority it gives to finitude, parochiality, and contingency over their conceptual and existential opposites (126).

The philosophical historicist might object to this second criticism that finitude, parochiality, and contingency are inevitable consequences of human historicity without being desirable. In other words, one can distinguish between what I shall call resigned and affirmative historicism. The resigned historicist acquiesces in unpleasant, even tragic truth whereas the affirmative historicist exults in the various ostensible advantages accruing from finitude, including creativity, freedom, and thus the dignity of the resolution to endure one's own contingency by investing it with nobility. There is no appeal to better or worse in resignation, but this version of historicism remains open to the charge of self-contradiction through the universalization of historicity. If I am not mistaken, however, the more common form of historicism in the 20th century is the affirmative species, and here we do find an inconsistent assertion of the

superiority of the three traits of historicism to their opposites. There is also a mixture of these two extremes. Older readers at least will still remember the existentialism of the previous generation, well exemplified by Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, in which he argues that life is meaningless, suicide a reasonable prospect, but one that he cannot bear and will obviate by the arbitrary creation of value.

To return to Page's argument, Chapter 3 is not all criticism; it closes with a list of the positive virtues of historicism: "They include the hermeneutic character of human experience, the openness of inquiry and the nonalgorithmic character of its progress, the value of discourse's nontheoretical ends, and the rationality tacit in tradition" (128). According to Page, all these virtues are compatible with First Philosophy and he proposes to preserve them within "a more hospitable whole," that is, a more hospitable account of philosophical historicism. That account deals with Hegel and Heidegger, who were previously assigned to a distinct species of philosophical historicists. Oddly enough, Page's book never discusses First Philosophy in any traditional way, as I noted early in this review. It is almost as though the rehabilitation of historicism is left to historicists. More accurately, however, after a discussion of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, to which I shall return in a moment, Page closes with an appreciation of Hegel, of whom it could be said (although Page does not say it explicitly) that the *Science of Logic* was his revision of Aristotelian *prōtē philosophia*.

The chapter on Heidegger contains a good discussion of his difference from Gadamer. The criticism is interesting in particular because it is expressed in Hegelian idiom. "Heidegger reminds us forcefully, where Gadamer does not, that whatever human finitude ultimately amounts to, the freedom of thought, the negation implied by critical appropriation, wrecks the image of total *Seinsverbundenheit*." And half a paragraph later, this time in criticism of Heidegger, "The intelligence that reveals contingency must be beyond it, in order to make that illumination possible" (153). And finally: "Dasein is at best a beautiful soul" (154).

The somewhat disconcerting conclusion of this book is then that it is Hegel rather than Aristotle who is said to provide us

with a "proper metaphysical context for appreciating historicist intuitions" (158). The conclusion is disconcerting because it makes Hegel the champion of First Philosophy rather than Aristotle. The context furnished for First Philosophy, we may infer from Page's characterization of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is the absolute standpoint, not absolute knowledge. This is of course not genuine Hegelianism, but as Page certainly knows, amounts to an adaptation that is also a softening or relaxing of the original. Page's quasi- or relaxed Hegelianism accordingly may be said to avoid the untenable dogmatism of ahistorical metaphysics while denying support to the thesis of the inevitable parochiality of thinking (174). By localising philosophy within the absolute standpoint, Page, in his semi-Hegelian persona, intends to preserve it from contingency and finitude as well as parochiality (186). I think that this is a plausible claim if and only if it is made clear what it means to attain to the absolute standpoint. For this clarity we shall have to look elsewhere.

Page's book fulfils two useful functions. The first is that he gives us a *tour d'horizon* of the varieties of historicism that are most prevalent today. The second is that he does not rest content with a facile refutation of historicism through the simple assertion of salutary slogans concerning the eternal status of truth and nobility or the impossibility of philosophy on historicist grounds. The historicist can easily respond to these slogans with the affirmation of nihilism. Philosophy, it may be said, is indeed impossible, precisely because we have no access to truth and nobility in any sense other than historical contingency and parochiality. The appeal to Hegel is evidently Page's way of blunting the nihilist force of this assertion by granting it, but in such a way as to show that its force depends upon what I shall call the *absoluteness of contingency*.

In order to develop this point, I have to go beyond Page's argument, which, instructive though it is, seems to me to stop at the crucial moment. I therefore make the following suggestion about a post-Hegelian reading of Hegel. Human life is indeed finite, contingent, and parochial, or in one word, perspectival. But this is not enough to establish historicism in the sense of the

inaccessibility of ahistorical truth. A perspective is a viewpoint, a vision or interpretation of life, in part or altogether. But there is nothing in the nature of a perspective that precludes its accessibility to the vision of many different investigators. In fact, those who most persuasively insist upon the "parochiality" of our perspectives do so by explaining how each differs from the others. The aforementioned Hegel is the example par excellence of this ascent to the absolute standpoint, a standpoint from which truth is in all cases local or parochial, when considered as the finite perspective that it is, but that rises to the level of eternity as the truth of just that local perspective. And the absolute is not some transcendent meta-truth but precisely the rotating circle of perspectives or "the eternal return of the same."

There is a certain (no doubt unintended) relation between Hegel and Nietzsche, the champion of contemporary philosophical historicists. These latter, misled by interpretations of Nietzsche like that of Deleuze, attempt to read the former as a thinker of difference, to the exclusion of identity. This is untenable. The image of the eternal return of the same is an unmistakable expression of the finite number of recurring and hence *identical* perspectives. Nietzsche's analysis of the perspectival structure of experience is itself possible only because he has understood that structure. His account of the difference of one perspective from the others in turn rests upon the intelligibility of each. This is the clue for the elaboration of Nietzsche's "political" or "world-historical" Platonism, according to which philosophers are the prophets and lawgivers to mankind. Stated with excessive concision, and disregarding chronology, Nietzsche is a dialectical middle term between Plato and Hegel; his dialectic, however, is neither eidetic nor conceptual but rhetorical.

These observations go beyond Page's explicit argument, but I find the point implied by the passages he quotes from Hegel on 178. On that same page, he states "philosophical historicism's deepest metaphysical failing. There is, so to speak, a law of diminishing returns in the trade-off between turning history into a pageant of contingency while at the same time asserting that it has the

substance and power to dominate reason—the more contingency, the less effective reality; the more flux, the less difference it is capable of making." As I would restate this, there are formal limits to the degree of contingency and flux that is compatible with the existence of history precisely in its identity as a sequence of finite and parochial perspectives.

It is now time to attempt an answer to the question that initiated my reflections on Page's book. As it turns out, Page does not take his bearings by Aristotle but redefines First Philosophy in a manner that is, at least at first sight, surprisingly historicist. In the last paragraph of his book, while praising Hegel and criticizing Gadamer, Page says that "philosophical historicism remains, in Gadamer's sense, a disabling prejudice, one of those prejudices that 'makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition' *Truth and Method* 270). In particular, it makes us deaf to the part of the tradition that is the whole of First Philosophy from Thales to Heidegger's *Being and Time*" (202). As the continuation of this paragraph shows, Page interprets the Hegelian conception of reason in history in a Platonic sense; and by extension, the reasonableness of history, as reflected in the history of western philosophy, is Platonism.

Page's Platonism is of course not that of classical philology; it is much closer to the famous assertion by Whitehead that western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato, or perhaps even more narrowly to the statement by someone (was it Ben Ray Redman?), that "wherever I go in my mind, I meet Plato coming back." Let me offer a third version of the same general point. Platonism in its genuine sense is the preservation of history rather than its repudiation because it attributes to the sequence of perspectives the intelligibility upon which contingency, finitude, and parochialism depend. The correct way in which to explicate Platonism is by thinking through the consequences of ordinary experience that cannot be denied or even doubted without the introduction of hypotheses far less plausible than the character of ordinary experience itself. It is pointless to begin with ontological or set-theoretical theories about Platonic Ideas, first, because the technical machinery put into play is altogether incommensurate with the language in which the Ideas

are discussed in the dialogues, and second, because the Platonic statement of the Ideas is *implausible*. If we are to arrive at the Ideas at all, it can only be through the compulsion of what everyone knows.

I would therefore revise my initial characterization of the ground upon which Page himself stands as a kind of relaxed Hegelianism. Let us now call it a relaxed Platonism, in which the so-called doctrine of Ideas is replaced by a constellation of fundamental perspectives. By extension, the Idea of the Good is replaced by the intrinsic luminosity of a perspective. In this light, let us reconsider the stated virtues of historicism (128). The hermeneutic character of human experience corresponds to the variety of perspectives represented by the various Platonic dialogues. In each dialogue, a perspective is defined by giving primacy to one defining feature of human existence: justice, wisdom, glory, and so on. These features are represented by a paradigmatic human being, say Glaucon and Adeimantus, Theaetetus or the Eleatic Stranger, Alcibiades, and so on. Socrates is the paradigm par excellence of the openness of human inquiry, and the shifts in Socrates' own assertions in different dramatic contexts, together with the shift from Socrates to four other main interlocutors (among whom I include Parmenides) indicates the nonalgorithmic character of philosophical progress. The fact that Plato wrote dramatic dialogues rather than theoretical treatises makes evident the value of discourse's nontheoretical ends, and the rationality tacit in tradition is subtly revealed by Socrates in the *Republic* when he says that the just or beautiful city is Greek, not barbarian.

The most difficult point to paraphrase in the "clear and distinct" terminology required of book reviewers is the ascent to the absolute standpoint. I cite the myth of the soul in the *Phaedrus*, in which the philosophical nature rises to the roof of the cosmos, through which it can stick out its head for a blurred, jostled and hence intermittent view of the hyperuranian beings or so-called Platonic Ideas. That the vision of the "absolute" (not a Platonic term, of course) accessible to the best soul is intermittent is made explicit by Socrates' remark elsewhere in the dialogue that human beings may aspire to philosophy but not to wisdom. The hyperuranian beings may be fixed in eternity, but the soul is firmly embedded in the cosmos

and rotates with it, thereby acquiring a surprisingly Heideggerian glimpse of being through the veil of temporality.

In other words, philosophy is *ex nihilo* or as Socrates sometimes says, a "divine gift" that cannot be explained, deduced from a more accessible principle, or taught like a *technē*. Hegel remarks somewhat surprisingly in the *Science of Logic* that one must will to rise to the level of the absolute. And yet, this is no more arbitrary than the countervailing demand by the anti-philosopher that one refrain from ascent to the absolute. On the contrary, it is radically less arbitrary, since it amounts to nothing more than keeping one's eyes open. What Page calls the intention of First Philosophy to get to the bottom of everything can only be approached if one starts at the top. It is precisely those who insist upon starting at the bottom that get nowhere, as is depressingly illustrated by the nihilism of our ostensibly anti-Platonist age.

I do not know whether Page would accept my platonisation of his conception of First Philosophy but I mean to validate his account of the virtues of what he calls philosophical historicism. On the other hand, I do not really like the expression "philosophical historicism" since what normally passes under that title is radically anti-philosophical and regularly confuses discursive poetry or rhetoric for philosophical thinking. Of course, Page is not to be blamed for employing a standard academic term, and it is clear from his partial defense that he sees the antipathy between the two parts of the expression. Let me spell this out a bit by considering the difference between "historicism" and "historicity."

The Ionian word *historiē* means "inquiry," and is normally used to refer to the attempt to ascertain what has happened either by direct inspection or through the interrogation of eye witnesses. It is a virtual synonym for "philosophy" in many of its ancient occurrences; one may institute an inquiry into the events of nature as well as the actions of human beings. This is not the place to survey the "history" (as we would now say) of the term *history*, except to note that in modern languages there is a connection between an account of what one has determined actually to be true by inquiry and a "story" or fiction. One could say that "history" is an instance

of those dialectical words, praised by Hegel, that designate opposite senses, in this case, truth and fiction. Of course, fiction may also be instructive or convey truth, and perhaps even a deeper truth than that of the account of the *res gestae*; thus Aristotle says that poetry is more philosophical than history. These remarks, brief and general as they are, suffice to indicate the extremely complicated semantic matrix in which is embedded the deceptively simple term "historicism." Historicism is presumably the view that truth and value are (to echo Page's terms) contingent, finite, and parochial. Page has shown us that if this is so, one must wonder how any sort of inquiry is possible at all. Events or occurrences may be contingent, finite, and parochial, for example, the failure of the West to defend the Bosnians against Serbian attack, but we record them on the assumption that they have something to say to us beyond the notation of their happening. Was the aforementioned attack an act of national liberation, a blatant attempt to establish the tyranny of one ethnic stock over another, or something indistinguishable from a local thunderstorm or other meteorological event (to borrow Spinoza's characterization of human passions)?

Oddly enough, on the relativistic thesis of historicism, there is no identification that is not a hidden or implicit judgment, and all judgments are vitiated by the transience of history or the multiplicity of perspectives. In short, to the historicist, there are no facts, but only texts waiting to be rewoven by the very attempt to read them. "Deciphering" is literally the dissolution of the ciphers in which truth is encoded. I will not continue this line of reflection because it seems obvious to me that historicism is a trivial, entirely uninteresting doctrine, one that has never been held by any serious philosopher and that is a shallow disguise for the fashionable dogmatism that replaces thinking in an age of decadence. Much more formidable is the thesis of the historicity of human nature or indeed, the historicity of being.

But the shift from historicism to historicity is also a shift from ideology to First Philosophy. At this point, I need to distance myself from Heidegger, to whom we owe the most influential version of the doctrine of historicity. The crucial point is that for Heidegger,

historicity is indeed an event, an epoch in the history of Being. This is not the place to develop the point in detail, but it has to be mentioned that there is nothing in *Being and Time* to substantiate the doctrine of the epochal nature of the revelation (through concealment) of Being. The most that could be said of Heidegger's work as a whole is that he identifies the history of western philosophy as a single epoch (and one with varying beginning and end-points, I add), an epoch that in some ambiguous sense constitutes an "error" but not a mistake, a path away from Being, one that we have apparently negotiated to its fruitless end and that must now be abandoned for a new beginning. Heidegger is a prophet of the *historical* nature of historicity. He thereby undercuts his own First Philosophy or renders the intelligible structure of any epoch of Being into an episode.

If the expression "the historicity of nature" is not to be a self-contradiction, then it must express something permanent in our understanding. A crucial step in the mediation of Heidegger and, say, the relaxed Plato described above, is to argue that so long as human beings exist, they will be defined by philosophy, which fulfils its founding role as the basis of that existence in the opening of perspectives, that is, in the manifestation of intelligibility. As to the connection between truth and value, it is our love of wisdom that ennobles us. This love of wisdom is not a dogma and it is certainly not a thesis that can be established by rational argumentation. What one has to show is rather that the demand for rational argumentation arises from the core of our being, and that this core is not a transcendent or metaphysical entity but the pulsebeat of everyday life. Plato called it *erōs*.

I want to suggest that the Platonic doctrine of eros captures the essential meaning of what has come to be called the historicity of being. There is of course an initial fundamental difference between the two doctrines. Eros is equivalent to genesis but not to the pure forms or Platonic Ideas. It looks initially as though historicity does not extend to being, and not even to our vision of being. But the evidence in the dialogues on this point is vague and even inconsistent. I have already referred to the curiously "Heideggerian" climax of

the vision of the hyperuranian beings by partial extension beyond the roof of the moving cosmos. One could also say that the doctrine of recollection is connected to the thesis of the visibility of the Ideas by reflection within images, and so that the veridical function of recollection is itself compromised by the historicity of icastic hermeneutics.

Whatever Plato may understand by the apprehension of pure forms, it cannot be radically different from the implied analogous procedure through which the "existentials" or categories of historicity are extracted from the contingent, finite, and parochial flux of historical experience. And when Heidegger refers to his journey as "on the way toward speech," this is not so different from the Socratic attempt to elicit a vision of the structure of the whole from the conversations that are at bottom Platonic monologues, if not quite Heideggerian soliloquys.

Historicity as First Philosophy begins, in the Platonic dialogues as in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, with the exhibition of the structure of the everyday. The fundamental difference between the two exhibitions is that Plato's is dramatic whereas Heidegger continues, despite all modifications, the "scientific" or phenomenological description instituted by Husserl. What the Husserlian approach gains in conceptual rigor and structural detail, it loses in its inertness, inflexibility, or lifelessness. I can only mention here that I find the Platonic dramatic phenomenology of human life altogether more universal in scope and rich in detail than the scientific version of Husserl.

But my immediate intention is not to berate Heidegger through the persona of Plato. I am making the quite different point that the categorial structure of everyday life is itself the direct expression of the "existentials" of historicity, and in that sense ordinary existence is the iconic representation of what Socrates calls "Ideas." Heidegger goes wrong because he transforms everyday life too quickly into ontology. In so doing, he makes the same mistake as that committed by modern natural and social science. There is a virtually immediate shift from the everyday standpoint to that of "theory." But "theory" turns out to mean *interpretation*, not intellectual apprehension.

Nietzsche's famous remark, "Interpretation, not explanation," is actually the battle-call of modern science; it is a battle-call to which march analysts, fundamental ontologists, continental hermeneuticists, and post-modernists alike. Everyday life is thus replaced immediately with a theoretical surrogate, a model or interpretation. Since the everyday life that it ostensibly models is regarded either as a residue of discarded interpretations or a morass of relativistic perspectives or a swamp of impressionism and anecdote, the model is compromised from the outset. How can there be a scientific interpretation of the chaotic or unintelligible?

I understand very well that this general formulation of the scientific study of human existence is honored in the breach. Empirical social and political science remains very close to one aspect or another of everyday life. But the overall picture is missing. Our empirical investigations are rooted in a theoretical understanding of theory as interpretation, and of interpretation as the creation of possible worlds, not the accurate expression of the enduring structure of the actual world. In short: those who devote themselves to the empirical, anti-metaphysical, hard-headed study of life as it is, end up in the creation of models or interpretations to which no life corresponds. This is because what counts as life is to be deduced from the model. We do not check the model on the basis of reality because what counts as reality is determined by the model. The everyday life from which we began is repudiated almost at once as an illusory epiphenomenon of scientific analysis and interpretation. But this is historicism, not historicity.

I understand very well that the unsympathetic reader will take me to be advocating the rejection of science and analytic or systematic philosophy in favor of literature. To do so, however, is entirely to miss my point. I want to save science, analytic thinking, and even systematic philosophy by preventing these laudable enterprises from cutting the ground out from under their feet. The relaxed Platonism or relaxed Hegelianism, even the relaxed Heideggerianism that I have described all too hastily in these pages, are intended as contributions to the preservation of First Philosophy and in such a way as not to sacrifice the virtues of historicity. Science derives

its human significance from First Philosophy, not from itself. Historicism is the virus that destroys science as well as philosophy. It was therefore for medical and so finally scientific reasons that I have attempted to distinguish it from historicity in my reflections on Carl Page's book. The key, I repeat by way of conclusion, is to take one's bearings by everyday life in its full richness as that which regulates philosophical and scientific theories. For without such regulation, theories become interpretations, that is to say, stories or fictions, and science as well as scientific philosophy is transformed into surrealist literature.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Philosophy in an Age of Postmodernism

I

According to Hegel, modern man prays by reading the morning newspaper. In a postmodern age, the appropriate revision of Hegel's maxim is accomplished by replacing the morning newspaper with The New York Review of Books. A hermeneutical analysis of the contents of a typical issue of The New York Review suggests an interesting difference between the editorial content of the reviews and the advertisements of forthcoming books. The latter are replete with messages of deconstruction, radical feminism, gender exploration, perspectivist interpretation, and in short, all varieties of the postmodern phenomenon. But the reviews themselves exhibit considerable restraint, and even a strong note of hostility, toward the more extreme manifestations of postmodernism.

It goes without saying that there is also sympathy for the latest views of the intellectual vanguard. But this sympathy is nuanced as well as confused. To take a significant example, one may learn from reading the New York Review that Plato, or at least Socrates, was an advocate of women's liberation, and even a democrat who accepted the principle of self-fulfillment for all persons. This thesis, however, is expressed in the language of what may be called classical Twentieth Century Liberalism, and not at all in the baroque syntax of deconstruction. The accents of empiricism and discursive analysis give a curiously "conservative" flavor to this liberal, but by no means anarchic message. To put this in another way, Foucault the historian and former Maoist who in the last years of his life defended Humanism and the Enlightenment, has a better reception in the New York Review than do Derrida or Lacan.

The excesses of the Modern Languages Association are not duplicated in the editorial content of the New York Review. This has something to do with the difference between the Academy and the public forum. The Academy may be politicized, but the New York Review, as a public forum, is political, and therefore it has political responsibilities, one of which is to adopt a rhetoric of lucidity. I want however to suggest a deeper reason for the restraint exhibited by contributors to The New York Review toward the extreme anarchy, syntactical, semantic, and political, of the arch-representatives of postmodernism.

There is a spiritual dislocation in the contemporary American intellectual community that has arisen from the inevitable conflict between good intentions and intellectual decadence. The liberal, as that name suggests, wishes to be free, not as a specimen of chaos, but in the service of the highest human aspirations. Those aspirations are theoretical as well as practical. But as was already foreshadowed in the hostility between Sparta and Athens, practical freedom is not well-served by theoretical freedom. Practical freedom is necessarily defined by moderation; otherwise it will deteriorate into the tyranny of excess, whether from the left or the right. But theoretical freedom is a stranger to moderation; as Plato taught us long ago, it is defined by madness.

It is a theoretically simple matter to distinguish between divine and pathological madness; but this distinction is difficult if not impossible to draw in practically efficacious terms. To take the case in point, if the reader will permit a rhetorical exaggeration for the sake of greater clarity, Spartan America has been invaded during the past fifty years by doctrines emanating from Athenian Europe. These doctrines are attractive because they reinforce the native American mistrust of social and political institutions; but they are also dangerous because they exploit a confusion or an ambiguity at the heart of native American virtue.

The doctrines in question have accelerated the decline of the so-called white Anglo-Saxon Protestant gentry, but in language which, however exaggerated, reminds us of our own Nineteenth Century tradition of romantic individualism. The confusion to which I have

just alluded is that between the romantic ideology of a new nation, a distant frontier, authentic existence in the mountains or forests, and the ethos of city and suburb, social and political responsibility, and a steady accumulation of material as well as spiritual wealth. Again to exaggerate for the sake of clarity, America is defined by the plainsman on the one hand and the industrial baron on the other, with the artist and intellectual caught in the middle and subjected to the distorting forces emanating from both extremes.

I understand that this portrait of the American psyche is an oversimplification of a complex theme. It is, however, in my view sufficiently accurate to cast some light on the contemporary debate about postmodernism, and to provide us with a clue as to how we might best proceed in attempting to defend moderation without sinking into spiritual stagnation. The spirit of Romanticism has been dislocated from the frontier to the imagination of the decadent intellectual. At the same time, the classical liberalism of the Enlightenment lives on in a contrasting spirit of empiricism, plain language and common sense that is not so opposed to solid bourgeois accomplishment as it likes to think.

One almost has the impression of witnessing an up-to-date revision of a novel by Henry James. What one wants to do is to save the sensitive artist from the philistine millionaire, or in somewhat different terms to arrive at a viable synthesis between the American virtue of a Lambert Strether and the continental elegance of Prince Amerigo, without producing the corruption of a Gilbert Osmond. Or so one might view the turmoil of the American psyche as enacted in the pages of The New York Review of Books.

American conservatives would do well to perceive the strong flavor of Anglophilia that pervades those pages. This is a point that cuts deeper than the surface opposition between liberals and conservatives. The Master of an Oxford college may express views similar in many ways to those of his American sponsor. But eight hundred years of tradition give those views a syntactic as well as semantic weight that is strikingly attractive to the American intellectual establishment. And this brings me directly to what I shall call my tactical thesis.

There is no longer any point in devoting the main thrust of our irony against the deranged disciples of charlatans and provocateurs, nor do I regard it as politically fruitful to engage in a simple-minded repudiation of postmodernism, which is in any case nothing but a pseudonym for modernity. In my opinion, the outstanding problem of political rhetoric in our time is to devise a way to infiltrate the fissure opened between what I have called the plainsman and the industrial baron, or if you prefer, between the existentialism of Davey Crockett and the decadence of Gilbert Osmond, the pre-postmodern anti-hero of Henry James's *Portrait of A Lady*.

In less allusive terms, our task is to capture the attention and channel the energies of the men and women in the middle, those who constitute a silent majority, not of the Lumpenproletariat, but of the intelligent and well-meaning although desperately ignorant American students. We would perhaps all agree that the road to the silent majority is not direct but oblique, namely, by way of those who will educate them and produce their works of art. Our immediate target, in other words, is precisely the reader, or to be more precise, the potential reader, of The New York Review of Books. This is the pedagogical formulation of the next task for philosophy in an age of postmodernism.

If this is too blandly expressed, and I admit that it may be, then let me say that the challenge of postmodernism is to take advantage of the radical confusion of contemporary intellectual dogma, not by attempting to initiate an equally confusing reorientation toward some mixture of Edmund Burke and the Athenian polis, or by the blatantly nonsensical claim that there is a direct and unbroken line connecting the Socratic school, the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures, and the key texts of the American Founding Fathers, but by a procedure which is at once more daring and closer to the truth, as well as infinitely more attractive to the restless American spirit.

The procedure to which I refer has nothing to do with conservatism or liberalism in the usual senses of those terms. It is a philosophical task that I want to recommend; namely the rethinking of the contemporary crisis known as postmodernism in

order to exhibit its Platonic origins. The fundamental theoretical error of postmodernism is to accept Heidegger's account of the history of western metaphysics as Platonism in a sense derived from the so-called theory of Ideas. But the Platonism that underlies postmodernism, or of which postmodernism is a distorted version, is much closer to that other key element of the Platonic dialogues, namely, Eros.

For the purposes of this essay, I will restrict my formulation of the issue to the political domain. Postmodernism may conveniently be regarded as the consequence of a misunderstanding of Nietzsche. In saying this, I have not forgotten the importance of Hegel's interpretation of the fulfillment of history, or of Alexandre Kojève's influential distortion of Hegel through the twin prisms of Marx and Heidegger.

But the influence of Hegel, and above all of Kojève, amounts for practical purposes to this: if we are now in a post-historical and post-anthropological epoch, then very far from being compelled to bore ourselves to death by repeating the cardinal tenets of Hegel's dialectico-speculative logic, we are free to produce a new race of mankind. We are open to transformation by a new prophet and lawgiver. Nietzsche's doctrine of the eternal return of the same is the middle term between Hegel's doctrine of the circularity of the concept, and so of Kojève's doctrine of the end of history, and Heidegger's emphasis upon the openness of human nature to the future, but also of the need to define oneself by an authentic choice of a possibility conditioned by one's tradition.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* time is represented as a gateway, called "moment" (*Augenblick*), from which two endless paths, future and past, stretch out in opposite directions. Heidegger's authentic choice of a possibility transmitted by the future is his equivalent to what for Nietzsche is a stepping into the gateway of the moment. By stepping into the gateway, we choose a historical possibility. Since time is an eternal return, it makes no difference whether we go forward into the future or backward into the past; differently stated, from the standpoint of the philosopher, or what Nietzsche in the preface to *The Antichrist* calls the Hyperborean, who stands outside history, the past is the same as the future.

Heidegger, as the prophet of temporality and historicity, is in effect a Hyperborean who refuses to acknowledge his stance outside of history. This refusal leads to a radical oversimplification and distortion of Nietzsche's complex teaching. I will provide some details shortly; here let me say that Nietzsche's Hyperborean or philosophical identity is suppressed in favor of his exoteric doctrine of perspectivism, will to power, and what he calls in a note "reversed Platonism." Nietzsche's fundamental intention is to cultivate a new race of human beings, and to give them their laws in exactly the same sense as Plato wished to be the prophet and legislator of the *kallipolis* of the *Republic*.

Like Plato, Nietzsche is forced to institute an elaborate program of political rhetoric in order to advance his comprehensive political, or as we may also refer to them, world-historical goals. I restrict myself here to the crucial purpose of this rhetoric. Nietzsche must create disciples who, although not capable of becoming supermen, will accelerate the destruction of late Nineteenth Century western civilization. This in turn requires them to believe that they are themselves supermen, or destructive creators; in other words, the artist-warriors who replace Plato's philosopher-warriors as the guardians of a new *politeia*.

Postmodernism is largely the creation of disciples of Nietzsche who, by taking his exoteric for his esoteric teaching, mistakenly regarded themselves as supermen. The success of Nietzsche is at the same time his failure: the exoteric doctrine triumphed, but in so doing, it suppressed the esoteric doctrine almost entirely. In order to "recuperate" postmodernism, to employ a technical term from deconstruction, or in other words to heal it of its central confusions, it is essential to show, not of course that Plato was a follower of Nietzsche's exoteric doctrine, but rather that the challenge of the future, and so the correct understanding of Nietzsche, and hence too of the opportunity represented by the hyperbolical expression "the end of history," is not "reversed Platonism" but Platonism itself; that is to say, Platonism in its practical, or practico-productive manifestation.

Allow me my own exoteric rhetoric. One has to show that Plato was in fact a modern, not an ancient. Or if you prefer, that there

is no quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, but rather between philosophy and sophistry. One has to show that the crisis in American education has not been caused by Nietzsche's fundamentally Platonic enterprise, but by the failure of that enterprise. It is this failure that currently enervates the center of the American psyche, a center between the two extremes of the frontier and the city, to allude to my earlier analysis.

In my opinion, this program has a distinct advantage over the usual "conservative" celebrations of the Great Books, the natural right tradition, and the ostensible direct line from American to Judaeo-Christian and pagan virtue. The advantage is that it speaks directly to the perturbed psyche of late-modern western educated men and women. My conservative colleagues will wish to interject at this point that it speaks to the perturbed spirit because it is itself perturbed, or in other words, dangerous. I agree. But I must insist that any political doctrine worth living for, and hence dying for, must be dangerous. It must be true, which is not to deny that the truth may be enhanced by rhetoric, and it must as true exhibit the perturbations of the human spirit.

In the Second Preface to his *Science of Logic*, Hegel refers to the peculiar restlessness of the modern spirit. But this is by no means a merely critical or negative remark. It is precisely the peculiar restlessness of the modern spirit that in Hegel's doctrine accomplishes the reappropriation of the past, or what we may call the reconciliation of the ancients and the moderns. In any case, it is not necessary to argue the theoretical superiority of restlessness to tranquility. Please recall that I introduced this series of remarks by a reference to tactics. The question at issue is how to turn late-modern restlessness to the best advantage.

In my opinion, the time is ripe to deconstruct the excesses of postmodernism by removing the sedimentation of Heideggerian historicist ontology, and with it the irresponsible political consequences of the unleashing of difference from identity. This procedure, as I understand it, would have two stages. The first stage is to correct the contemporary misunderstanding of Nietzsche by establishing his affiliation with the philosophical politics of the Platonist tradition,

as distinct from the so-called metaphysics of Platonism. The second stage is to devise a rhetoric that is capable of enlisting the Eros of our brightest students in the task of rethinking the historical possibilities of the present crisis on a basis other than that of an appeal either to the dissoluteness of Athenian diversity or the stupor of Spartan rigidity.

To a considerable extent, these two stages overlap. In any event, one must first achieve clarity on the big picture before one can engage in an intelligent construction of an effective political rhetoric. I shall devote the balance of my paper to a discussion of Nietzsche's actual, i.e., political rather than ontological, Platonism. This discussion would require elaboration on every point, but one must start somewhere; I shall try to be circumstantial enough to provide some depth to my programmatic beginning.

II

In previous publications, I have argued that Nietzsche is no more a Platonist in the Heideggerian sense of the term than is Plato. I have further contended that Nietzsche may fairly be called a Platonist with respect to his conception of the relation between rhetoric and philosophy. To restate these two theses, Nietzsche's Platonism has nothing to do with a doctrine of Platonic Ideas or the hypothesis of two worlds, and so it is not a "metaphysical" doctrine in Heidegger's sense of that expression. But neither is it, properly or primarily speaking, an "ontological" doctrine as that term is employed in so much current German discussion of Nietzsche.

To state my point in positive terms, Nietzsche shares to a significant degree (but not completely) the Platonic conception of the nature of the philosopher. He accepts the Platonic conception of the philosopher as a lawgiver and king: that is to say, as one who legislates in a comprehensive sense for humanity, and who rules human beings through their adherence to his laws. One may go a step farther and say that these laws "produce" or "make" a new kind of human being, namely, the citizens of the philosophical city; as Socrates puts it in the *Republic*, the guardians are made by the

nomoi of the city (VII, 519e1–520a4), and these are of course made by Socrates (that is, by Plato).

The difference between Plato and Nietzsche is not easy to state, and it cannot be more than mentioned in the present context. It turns upon the question of the quarrel between philosophy and poetry, or as one could also express this, the relation between mathematics and poetry. For Nietzsche, mathematics is itself poetry. It follows from this that what Socrates calls "making" is for Nietzsche a version of creation *ex nihilo*, that is to say, a creation from chaos in accord with the will of the philosopher-prophet.[1]

In a slightly different formulation, "nature" is for Nietzsche in its pejorative sense the *natura* of Stoicism and in its favorable sense the *res extensa* of the Cartesian and for that matter Newtonian tradition, but a *res extensa* the mathematical structure of which is a sheer human creation: a perspective enforced by human will that masks an infinite regress of perspectives, what one might almost call, in Leibniz's phrase, "petites perceptions" but which are not summable into formal structure. On the contrary, these small perceptions or perspectives (a term brought into philosophical prominence, incidentally, by Leibniz) are the effulgence of chaos. Nietzschean "science," which is philological rather than physical, is thus simultaneously interpretative construction and analytical deconstruction.

Again I must allude to a complex problem in a brief remark. The so-called "postmodern" interpretation of Nietzsche is of interest because, despite the radically anti-Nietzschean use it makes of his texts, the best representatives of this school understand that Nietzsche has nothing to do with orthodox academic philosophy, of which he once remarked: *philosophia academica delenda est*. On the other hand, the postmodern interpretation is essentially flawed by its tendency to emphasize the deconstructive dimension of Nietzsche's teaching and to deny or to minimize his constructive teaching.

This constructive teaching, as I have suggested, is decisively Platonic, if an exaggerated version of Platonism. This emerges at once from the following passage in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "the philosopher, as *we* understand him, we free spirits—as the man of the most comprehensive responsibility, who has the conscience

[*das Gewissen*] for the total development of mankind."[2] In the same work, Nietzsche goes on to distinguish the philosophers from the scholars: "*the authentic philosophers however are commanders and lawgivers*: they say 'let it be thus!'"[3]

This comprehensive responsibility of the philosopher is rooted in the synoptic vision of the Hyperborean who dwells far to the north, unreachable by land or by sea, in other words outside of the transient perspectives of history. Nietzsche includes himself among the Hyperboreans in the first and seventh paragraphs of *The Antichrist*, which appeared in 1889, and is one of the last works to be approved by Nietzsche for publication. This segment, as the editors of the new Nietzsche edition, Colli and Montinari, tell us, "was the preface to the *Will to Power*, under the title *We Hyperboreans*, according to the plan of 26 August, 1888."[4] The Hyperboreans are not historically bound expressions of a unique perspective but philosophers: "we have discovered happiness, we know the way, we have found the exit from entire millennia of the labyrinth.[5]

The task of the Hyperborean is to decide "which type of man one ought to *breed*, ought to *will*."[6] Hence one must be pitiless toward Christianity, or what Nietzsche calls elsewhere Platonism for the masses; one must use the surgeon's knife to cut away decadence: "that is our form of philanthropy, thereby are we philosophers, we Hyperboreans!"[7]

That this understanding of Nietzsche's image of the Hyperboreans is valid, may be supported by a crucial passage in the Forward to *The Case of Wagner*: "What does a philosopher require of himself as the first and last thing? To overcome his time within himself, to become 'timeless.' With what must he undergo therefore his hardest struggle? With that precisely whereby he is the child of his time. Truly, I am as well as Wagner the child of this time, that is to say a decadent: except that I understood this, I defended myself against it. The philosopher in me defended himself against it."[8]

When Nietzsche refers to his teaching in a famous fragment as "reversed Platonism,"[9] we must not understand this to mean that he affirms the triumph of historical perspective over synoptic vision.

The reversal, according to him, is the advocacy of "life within illusion as goal."[10] In other words: the nonphilosopher, and so too the philosopher as a historical person, must step into the gateway of time, and thereby both choose or construct as well as accept as destined a specific historical perspective. This is a necessary condition for life.

Whereas the philosopher-king of the *Republic* is a soldier and dialectician (and before that, a mathematician), Nietzsche's philosopher-king is a soldier and artist. Suffice it to say that Nietzsche poeticizes the mathematical or quasi-mathematical dimension of Platonism, thereby anticipating Heidegger's own interpretation (in his middle period) of Platonism as perspectivism. But the synoptic vision of the Hyperborean is the perspective of all perspectives; as such, it is identical with the intuition of the eternal return of the same, Nietzsche's poetic version of Hegel's circular concept of the Absolute.

Platonic *poiēsis* does not disagree with Nietzsche's assessment of man as "the not yet constructed animal."[11] Politics is the art of weaving, that is to say, the art that provides man with an artifact to supplement his natural imperfection. Whether there is an ultimate ground in the Platonic dialogues to sustain the difference between mathematics and poetry must here be left an open question. What is of interest today is that Plato and Nietzsche agree upon the union between the two philosophical tasks of self-knowledge and comprehensive legislation. Whether we define the philosopher as the wisest human being or the one with the most powerful will, it follows in both cases that he is destined by nature to rule. And this is true whether nature is *physis* or chaos.

Nietzsche's self-characterization as a psychologist and his continuous interest in paradigmatic human beings is the analogue to Plato's exhibition of the multiplicity of human nature in the *dramatis personae* of his dialogues. Nietzsche says: "I want to live through all of history in my own person and make all power and force my own."[12] The Socratic counterpart is his assertion in the *Phaedrus* (229e4–230a6) that he has no time for the scientific interpretation of religious myths because he is fully occupied with the need to know

himself, whether he is a monster like Typhon or something that is more gentle and shares in the divine.

I cannot discuss the difference between Socrates and Plato, save to remark that whereas Socrates legislates in conversation, Plato publishes these conversations. Plato himself does not appear in his dialogues; in Nietzsche's fine expression concerning the nature of Socrates: *prosthe Platōn opisthen te Platōn messē te Chimaera.*[13] Nietzsche's own disguise is equally elaborate: he combines the excessive candor of late modernity with an aristocratic love of masks.[14]

There is also a Nietzschean addendum to Socrates' remark about self-knowledge in the *Phaedrus* that illustrates the aforementioned reversal of Platonism: "in order to live alone, one must be either a beast or a god—says Aristotle. This omits the third case: one must be both—a *philosopher.*"[15] The conceptual midpoint between Socrates and Nietzsche is Machiavelli, whose *Il Principe* Nietzsche ranks with Thucydides for its closeness to his own "unconditioned will not to fool oneself and to see reason in *reality.*"[16]

In Chapter XVIII of *Il Principe,* Machiavelli tells us that "it is necessary for a prince to act both as a beast and as a man."[17] This advice, he says, was taught by the ancients in a masked way, when they write that Achilles was assigned to the tutelage of Chiron the centaur.[18] Socrates poses the alternative of beast or divine nature for himself; Machiavelli conjoins man and beast in the prince; Nietzsche identifies the philosopher as beast and god. The two moderns are blunter than Socrates; hence the conjunction replaces the alternative.[19] And Nietzsche is ambiguously yet unmistakably closer to Socrates than to Machiavelli.

If I may be permitted a paradox, Nietzsche is a Hyperborean who publishes his memoirs. As such, he poses us with a rhetorical problem that is not epiphenomenal but goes to the heart of his teaching. The problem arises from the unteachable nature of the philosopher: "one must 'know' it from experience."[20] In the same passage on the philosophical nature, Nietzsche poses another aspect of the rhetorical problem by asserting that philosophical thinking is closely related to dancing, a theme that one meets regularly in his texts.[21]

In Plato's *Republic,* the philosophical nature undergoes three main stages of education: music, mathematics, and the dialectic of pure Ideas. In Nietzsche's reversed Platonism, the second and third stages are illusions or falsifications of the first. Apollo is a mask of Dionysus. One could also say that the political role of education in the *Republic* is to discipline Eros. In Nietzsche, this discipline comes from Eros itself: it is narcissism; and this is why Nietzsche's political Platonism is so often taken for a doctrine of radical individualism.

The odd feature of Nietzsche's doctrine is that, in comparison with Plato's, it is monistic. Eros (under its pseudonym, the will to power) is not contrasted with form, the object of desire. Yet monism dissolves through its inner instability into an equally unstable politics of solitude. I can only indicate here what I mean by this: Nietzsche projects two irreconcilable impressions; first, that the few as well as the many are constructed or created by the will of the lawgiver, and second, that there are no authentic disciples of a thinker who teaches the uniqueness of every existential perspective. Whereas the impressions are irreconcilable at the level of impressions, they may be reconciled at a deeper level if the teaching of uniqueness is understood as in the service of the creation of disciples.

It is in this light that I understand the following passage from Nietzsche's *Nachlass*: "it is not enough to bring a teaching; one must also transform mankind by force, in order that it accept that teaching!—Zarathustra finally grasps this."[22] That this teaching is not artistic but political in the grand or Platonic sense (and that it is Nietzsche's teaching, not Zarathustra's: "Resolve: I want to speak, and no more Zarathustra"[23]), is evident from the following entry in the notebooks of 1883: "My demand: to produce natures that are superior to the entire genus 'mankind': and to this goal to sacrifice myself and those who are 'closest' to me."[24]

To summarize this last series of observations: when Nietzsche says "I write for a genus of mankind that is not yet present: for the 'masters of the earth'," he does not contradict an observation from the same period: "I write for myself alone."[25] This is what I mean by a politics of solitude, as well as by Nietzsche's narcissistic Eros.

If Nietzsche's poetry is politics on the grand scale, then by inversion Plato's politics is poetry on the grand scale. The just city of the *Republic* is a discursive mimesis of "the paradigm laid up in heaven" (IX, 592a11; 592b2–5). In other words, it is a philosophical artifact or poem. The guardians, as I noted earlier, are said to be made by the *nomos*. Their souls are prepared by musical images of the original forms of the free man's virtues to become "demiurges of the freedom of the city" (VII, 519e1–520a4; III, 401a7-c9; III, 394b9-c1). Even the philosopher, as an offspring of the city, is produced by the *nomos*, which is, of course, itself produced by Socrates (VII, 519d8 ff.).

As is obvious throughout the Platonic dialogues, Socrates conveys the nature of the individual human soul by images, not by what professors of philosophy call "arguments."[26] Differently stated, all Socratic arguments are *ad hominem*, or rhetorical rather than logical. They are thus aspects of his ongoing self-examination, in obedience to the command of the Delphic oracle. Nevertheless, one cannot forget that part of this self-examination is the claim that Eros fulfills itself in the love of pure forms.

It should also not be forgotten that such a love, namely, the highest manifestation of Eros, has nothing to do with politics. It is rather in a curious way the counterpart to Nietzschean narcissism. As Socrates says in the *Philebus* (28c6–8): "the wise all agree, thereby exalting themselves, that intellect [*nous*] is king for us of heaven and earth." A complete account of Nietzsche's political Platonism would have to analyze the difference between the political and the philosophical Eros, as that distinction is drawn by Diotima in the *Symposium*, and then consider the intricate relation between Eros and *thymos*, a relation that underlies much of the portrait of the soul in the *Republic*.

Socrates asserts in the *Republic* that mathematics is a dream about being.[27] In the same context, it is plain that philosophers dream of becoming dialecticians, or those who reason in a presuppositionless manner by means of pure forms alone. In slightly different terms, the philosopher asks and answers questions for his own sake alone, although he does not begrudge others from benefitting by this process.[28] We are therefore required to wonder whether the doctrine of

the political responsibility of philosophers within the city that good men wish for is not itself a dream akin to Nietzschean music.

Perhaps the difference between these two philosophical symphonies can be expressed in a politically useful way as follows. Both Plato and Nietzsche engage in psychiatric or pedagogical music, but all questions of mathematics to one side, they assign a different role to courage in their respective compositions. In the *Republic*, the courage of the soldier is subordinate to the intelligence of the philosopher-king. Courage is explicitly associated with resistance to the fear of death (III, 386a6 ff.). This is the virtue characteristic of the soldier, who defends the city against internal and external enemies.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, courage is aggressive rather than defensive. It is linked to acceptance of the doctrine of the eternal return and in that way with what in human nature overcomes the bestial.[29] Courage also expresses the Nietzschean transmutation of Dionysian Eros into *amor fati*, which has nothing to do with the Platonic discharge of Eros in the vision of pure Ideas. In sum, when Nietzsche says that "the free man is a warrior,"[30] this is not simply an attack on Christianity but is also reversed Platonism.

Nietzschean politics is thus an expression of the Platonic teaching that the philosopher, understood in the extreme case as the embodiment of intelligence, must legislate and rule every aspect of human existence. But it is as it were a Platonism gone mad, an extreme or Hyperborean form of divine *mania* in which courage transcends *phronēsis*, if ironically in the service of the prudent perception that the impossibility of Platonic philosophy, at least in its exoteric version, requires a new exoteric teaching of the will to power. Whether madness is the best spokesman for prudence is precisely the central problem of our epoch.

We can also restate this as the problem of honesty. At first consideration, it appears that Nietzsche is a fierce partisan of honesty. A more careful reading leads us to appreciate the political consequences of Nietzsche's praise of masks. Honesty is itself a mask of concealment, which is to say that it is not honest but a special form of Nietzsche's rhetoric of shouting. It is today sometimes necessary,

Nietzsche observes, to speak and act coarsely: "that of which one does not *speak loudly* and scream, *is not there*."[31]

Yet this is not the whole story. If we go down one level deeper, there is, I believe, a philosophical imperative to tell the truth, always in a way that is suited to one's time, and therefore in Nietzsche's case in an exaggerated and even coarse manner. The fundamental political difference between Nietzsche and Plato is at the same time their point of similarity: the understanding that philosophy is not merely a prophetic but also a political form of legislation. Rhetoric is always political. Which rhetoric one employs is a function of the historical epoch, and so of one's political possibilities.

The Platonic revolution can take place only in the souls of just men. Nietzsche, despite his Hyperborean aestheticism, or perhaps because of its nature as a consequence of the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, is emboldened to foresee a revolution in fact. All factual revolutions require two things beyond everything else: first, a rhetoric that is coarse enough to move human beings to destroy the existing order, and second, an honesty that is pure enough to justify this destruction to "the happy few," who will pay the highest price, as we have seen in every revolution with the possible exception of our own.

The current popularity of Nietzsche in the United States is an unmistakable sign that the days of the Founding Fathers are long past. Intellectual and spiritual conservatism in the United States, whatever its intrinsic merits, if it is not mere aesthetic *Schwärmerei*, must employ a coarse and exoteric rhetoric that, however different in flavor and tone from Nietzsche's, accords with his criterion of effectiveness

Nietzsche's adoption of madness in the service of aristocratic prudence is a dangerous cast of the philosophical dice, no less profound and instructive because it has failed, at least so far, as is plain from the political views of his most influential contemporary champions. But prophets see farther than ordinary folk; the history of Nietzsche's influence is not yet complete. Those who regard themselves as Nietzsche's heirs may instead be his instruments.

What calls itself postmodernism may be just another stage in the immolation of Nineteenth Century bourgeois European civilization.

It is now time to bring this paper to an end. What does Nietzsche's political Platonism contribute to our understanding of the politics of postmodernism, and still more concretely, to the task of philosophy in the coming decades? I limit myself to the following provisional conclusions. (I) The task of preserving a historical tradition from decadence is always poetic or active rather than simply conservative or reactive. (II) The difference between Platonic and Nietzschean rhetoric (as distinct from substantial philosophical differences) is largely explained by their different historical circumstances. Plato was initiating our tradition, namely, the insemination of philosophy into the agora. Nietzsche, on the other hand, was attempting to dispose of the corpse of that tradition, so that the future would not be poisoned by its decaying spirit.

In closing, I wish to draw a corollary from these two conclusions. I alluded above to the famous Nietzschean assertion that man is the not yet fully constructed animal and in that context I stated that this assertion is not incompatible with Plato's practico-production. One could object to this that the city is for Plato, even as an artifact, a copy of a heavenly paradigm and so that there is for Plato only one beautiful city, whereas there are many for Nietzsche.

In my opinion, which I can only state here, this objection is unfounded. First: it assumes that the city in the *Republic* is seriously intended as a model for practical politics. Second: it misunderstands the various senses in which philosophers may rule, and hence too the political implications of philosophical rhetoric, the adjustment of one's discourse to the nature and circumstances of the audience. This is another way of saying that the objection misunderstands the sense in which it is true to say that life is perspectival, a truth that is exhibited by the Platonic dialogues. These issues cannot be resolved here. But by posing them, I am able to formulate my corollary. Political responsibility begins in an accommodation of philosophy to its local circumstances. This is a first principle, not an invitation to compromise one's principles. The philosopher enters into the marketplace in order to succeed, not to display his principles.

This is one of the many meanings of Nietzsche's famous statement that "everything deep loves the mask."

In this essay, I have tried to give specificity to the question of the current situation in philosophy, as well as to my suggestion concerning future tasks. The debate of the past two decades concerning postmodernism has been marked by much exaggeration and a good bit of foolishness, but it is also a serious manifestation of the continuous decay of confidence in Enlightenment. I believe that we require a serious debate about the nature of Enlightenment. But I do not believe that this debate can be conducted simply from the perspective of late-modern self-understanding. The key issue of Enlightenment is the relation between reason and freedom. Criticism of the Enlightenment turns upon a long-developing dissociation between reason and freedom, or in other words upon a gradually intensifying association between freedom and the imagination. One of the crucial elements in this dual development has been the influence of Nietzsche. In the present paper, I have tried to correct some glaring inadequacies in the predominant contemporary interpretation of Nietzsche. It is not a repudiation of Nietzsche, but fidelity to clues that he himself offers, if I say that in attempting to understand how we are free to criticize reason, we require the assistance of Plato's conception of philosophy. It is, after all, the freedom of reason by which reason is criticized. And this is also to suggest that in our understanding of Plato, we have something to learn from Nietzsche.

Notes

1 In fact, "the world is a work of art giving birth to itself" [*Kritische Studien Ausgabe*, ed. Colli and Montinari (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1980), XII, 119; 2 (114) 1885/86]. But this process of self-gestation is shaped at the human level by the will of the prophet-lawgiver. All subsequent citations from Nietzsche are from the aforementioned edition.
2 *JGB*, III, 79 (61). Cf. VII, 151 (214): "unsere Vielfältigkeit und Kunst der Verkleidung."
3 *Ibid.*, VI, 145 (211).
4 *KSA*, XIV, p. 437.

5 VI, 169 (1).
6 *Ibid.*, 170 (3).
7 *Ibid.*, 174 (7).
8 VI, 11.
9 VII, 199; 7 (156); 1870/71.
10 *Op. cit.*: "das Leben im Schein als Ziel."
11 *JGB* III, 81 (62): "das noch nicht festgestellte Thier."
12 IX, 666; 17 (4); 1882.
13 *JGB* V, 111 (190); IX, 234 (289).
14 See esp. *JGB* V, 234 (289).
15 *Götzen-Dämmerung* VI, 59 (3).
16 *Ibid.*, VI, 156 (2).
17 "e necessario sapere bene usare la bestie e lo uomo." *Il Principe e Discorsi*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milano: Feltrinelli Editore, 1960), p. 72.
18 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
20 *JGB* VI, 147 f. (213).
21 For example, in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, IV, part 3, 272 (2). Cf. *Ecce Homo* VI, 345 (6): "Zarathustra ist ein Tanzer."
22 X, 519; 16 (60); 1883.
23 XI, 83; 25 (277); 1884.
24 X, 244; 7 (21); 1883.
25 XI, 50; 25 (137); 1884 and X, 341; 8 (20); 1883.
26 Cf. *Phaedrus* 246a3 ff. and *Republic* II, 368b4 ff. The images are the winged charioteer and the city in these two cases.
27 *Republic* VII, 531b1-c5.
28 *Ibid.*, VII, 528a1–5.
29 See IV, part 3, 199 (1) especially and cf. part 1, 59.
30 *Götzen-Dämmerung* VI, 140 (38).
31 XII, 41; 1 (134); 1886.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Review of Richard Wolin's The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism From Nietzsche to Postmodernism *(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004)*

Let me say at once that in my opinion Richard Wolin has written a useful book that contains much good sense. Unfortunately there are also serious defects that dampen my enthusiasm, although they do not prevent me from recommending the book to the reader of this review. Let us turn now to the details. Wolin's book may be described as a defense of the (primarily) French and English Enlightenment against the attacks of a variety of intellectual movements that are too often blended together under the portmanteau terms "post-modernism" and, more narrowly, "deconstruction." As the title of Wolin's book suggests, he means by "anti-Enlightenment" a fuzzy set of properties, predominant among them a distrust, even a hatred of reason. This raises a big question that is not adequately faced by Wolin. I refer to the sense of "reason" that pervades this book. There is only one reference to reason in the Index; the passage in question refers to Foucault's conception of reason as a mechanism of oppression as well as to Derrida's critique of logocentrism and Lyotard's view that rational accord is in fact an exercise of force (7–8). This is not to deny that Wolin uses the words "reason" and "rational" with great frequency, but to note that in doing so, he seldom gets beyond platitudes, and what is even worse, he clearly identifies being reasonable with being a political liberal. The meaning of this term is again taken for granted; it refers to persons who endorse empiricism, science, and logical deduction, but who are also

partisans of the rule of law, historical progress, and egalitarianism (for representative passages, see 8, 11, 118–121). It is difficult to find a straightforward defense of the aforementioned properties in Wolin's book; they function throughout as sign-posts that guide the discussion but do not deepen it. Wolin plainly assumes that everyone knows what it is to be reasonable, and he also assumes that reasonableness is synonymous with political liberalism. To use another of Wolin's inadequately defined terms, the anti-rationalist is a fascist, of which there are left- as well as right-wing versions.

It might be held that fascism is connected with the right, not the left, but this goes contrary to Wolin's (I think correct) argument. My problem is not so much, or not at all, with Wolin's opinions on anti-rationalism. It is rather with his taking for granted that rationalism is what pro-Enlightenment partisans of extreme scientific reasoning say it is. To this I add that Wolin's portrait of the Enlightenment is much too narrow. All too typical of Wolin's book is the concluding passage in which he paraphrases with approval the assertion of the Italian political philosopher, Norberto Bobbio, that political liberalism "has become the unsurpassable political horizon of our time" (310). This may be true, but not all the major figures of the Enlightenment were scientific partisans in the style of, say, Condorcet, nor were they all political liberals of the contemporary sort. But equally important, not all those who share some important values with Wolin are "liberals" in his sense of the term. The expression "political liberalism" is glossed by Wolin as "a figure for the precepts of rule of law, human rights, and popular sovereignty" (*ibid.*). I happen to know of many conservatives who also endorse the rule of law, human rights, and popular sovereignty. Conservatism of this sort is not to be found in Wolin's book. I think it is fair to say that, whereas Wolin does not explicitly make the egregious error of associating conservatism with fascism, he comes dangerously close to it. Let me illustrate this by citing a passage that also illustrates Wolin's all too frequent style of reasoning.

> Much has been written about the corollaries between fascism and 'irrationalism' that remains conjectural and superficial. It would be foolish to assert that all doctrines that radically

> question the primacy of reason exist in a symbiotic relation with forces of political reaction, let alone fascism. Nevertheless, it would be equally misleading to deny that one of fascism's central ideological tenets entails a rejection of reason and all that it historically represents (184).

The passage is quite correct, as far as it goes. But in the context of Wolin's overall argument, the rejection of reason is equivalent to the rejection of Enlightenment liberalism and progressivism; or in other words, it is equivalent to political reaction, which is replaced in the next sentence by "fascism."

Differently stated, there is no room in Wolin's argument for the thesis that whereas modern scientific and empiricist conceptions of reason are essential ingredients in a comprehensive analysis of that phenomenon, these conceptions are neither a complete picture, nor are they self-evidently consistent with one another. I could find no treatment of this problem in Wolin's account that extends beyond a phrase here and a term there. As is obvious from his (entirely sound) critique of Derridean deconstruction (for example, Wolin shows Derrida's own "realism" or attempt to provide a correct account of how to read a text, and so too the political aspirations of deconstructionism: 222, 228 ff.), Wolin recognizes the need for value judgments and he sees that deconstruction makes such judgments impossible (306–308). But his perfunctory defense of the need to use reason to obtain such judgments entirely overlooks the fact that scientific rationalism and logical argumentation cannot supply them. There is nothing in Wolin's book to defend us against the dissolution of ethical and political rationalism, or against the charge that his entire book constitutes, not an exercise of reason, but a rhetorical concatenation of the typical prejudices of contemporary liberal academicians. Wolin castigates H. G. Gadamer for the latter's attempt to give a reasonable account of prejudice as a structural feature of man's historical situatedness (118–119), without even noticing that he is much guiltier on this score than Gadamer, because he (Wolin) has no evident perception of the problem with respect to his own orientation. Still, the criticism has some weight, but not enough to validate Wolin's classification of Gadamer among the enemies of reason.

Gadamer's conception of prejudice and tradition may be wrong, but it is both intelligible and capable of a rational defense, by which last I do not necessarily mean that it is true. Unreason, I would argue, should be reserved for doctrines that are intrinsically unintelligible, or that assert the unintelligibility of the doctrine itself; this charge could very reasonably be directed against Derrida on the basis of Wolin's own account of the French sage.

While I am on the subject of prejudice, and as a further illustration of Wolin's polemical rhetoric, consider the footnote number 47 to page 308 in Wolin's book. This is a complicated note that refers to Nietzsche by way of a quotation from Heidegger, and then shifts to a quotation from Stephen Holmes:

> Why would some of America's leading intellects revile a tradition devoted, among other things, to freedom of thought? A generation ago, Martin Heidegger's subterranean but hypnotic influence prepared the way for this odd development. His harsh indictment of 'modernity' was adapted to the mental horizon of their new American audience by Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss.

This passage can only mean to say that Strauss and Arendt were fascists and enemies of reason who promulgated Heidegger's doctrine of the restriction of freedom of thought in the United States. Despite his discretion in hiding behind Holmes, Wolin clearly endorses this citation. There is no sign of anything but approval on Wolin's part, nor is there any other reference to Strauss or Arendt in his book. Though I am hardly an admirer of Heidegger's character, I have to say that in many decades of reading his books, I have never found an argument against freedom of thought. It is true that Heidegger's conception of authentic *Denken* is quite different from Wolin's understanding of thinking. But neither Wolin nor Holmes succeeds in restricting the defense of human freedom to a narrow loyalty to Enlightenment rationalism. Let us however suppose that Heidegger was in fact an enemy, not of thinking, but of freedom of speech. How does this enmity show itself in Leo Strauss, who if anything, spent his career in the United States revealing with much freedom, and to his own professional detriment, the "secret teaching" of the

great thinkers of the philosophical tradition? And in what way was Strauss more unreasonable than Wolin or Holmes? I have to say that I was offended by this evasive, even cowardly footnote.

Wolin is primarily a historian of late modern and contemporary European political thought. He is not a philosopher, and presumably would not claim to be. His intention in this book is to place poststructuralism in its historical context (188). Somewhat more inclusively, Wolin has the reasonable intention of approaching the fate of Enlightenment and its dominant ethical and political paradigm by studies of a handful of seemingly disparate thinkers, among them Nietzsche, Jung, Gadamer, Battaille, Derrida and Blanchot, as well as a multitude of secondary and tertiary figures. These thinkers share one version or another of the spirit of Counter-Enlightenment, namely, an enmity toward rationalism in Wolin's rather vague sense of the term, plus a reactionary political bent that leads them from both the left and the right extremes of the spectrum toward fascism. I liked especially in Wolin's account the recognition that Nietzsche was a political thinker, not an aesthete, and I am grateful to him for calling attention to the equivocations that marked Gadamer's relations with the political and academic apparatus of the third Reich. Wolin seems to me to go too far in his treatment of Gadamer, and to be unfair in his very negative assessment of Jean Grondin's mammoth biography of the German thinker. I would say here only that I know of no competent accusation to the effect that Gadamer was a racist or a fascist. His greatest defect seems to have been opportunism. Despite Stephen Holmes's innuendo, Leo Strauss was hypersensitive on the issue of the Nazis, and once made me swear to him that I would never shake Heidegger's hand. I was about to leave for Europe, and to meet several of Strauss's friends and friendly acquaintances, one of whom was Gadamer. Strauss took it for granted that I would be shaking Gadamer's hand. This is not proof, but it goes a long way with me. Not far enough to erase Wolin's most damning evidence, to be sure. Especially difficult to explain on grounds other than opportunism is Gadamer's famous lecture during the occupation of France on Herder and racism. I am, however, most depressed by the anecdote of how Gadamer benefitted from his friend Richard

Kroner's loss of his professorship in 1934 and his callous remark on the episode (98–99). In any event, even a watertight proof that someone was a Nazi supporter does not necessarily invalidate his (or her) intellectual work. Central to Wolin's treatment of Gadamer is his criticism of the aforementioned doctrine of prejudice, or what comes perhaps to the same thing, the veneration of tradition (108). This is in a way a curious criticism for a historian to make, especially because Wolin again seems not to notice that the doctrine applies to him as a spokesman for the liberal scientific Enlightenment.

Wolin is very good on the foolishness of the "political" thinking of the postmodern French anti-philosophes, as well as on the general anti-Americanism of advanced continental thinkers. He deserves praise for his emphasis on the fact that fascism can come from the left as well as the right. And it has to be said that Wolin's erudition with respect to the late-modern scene of largely second-rate artists and ideologues is quite impressive. One should know these things, however boring they may be, and Wolin helps us here; at least he helped me. There are some defects in the erudition, in particular with respect to the ancient Greeks. Wolin incorrectly states that the Weimar Republic is a version of what Glaucon in the *Republic* calls the city of pigs (111); as the readers of this review will know, the city of pigs is a primitive society lacking in luxuries of every kind, especially including philosophy. Similarly, Wolin characterizes Plato's *Seventh Letter*, the philosopher's account of the failure of his intervention into practical politics, as an invocation to give up philosophy for politics (108). He refers to "first philosophy" (an Aristotelian term) as "an a priori and speculative approach to history and politics," a strange way to characterize the man who separated first philosophy from ethics and politics (311). Wolin's almost complete silence concerning Leo Strauss is, I suggest, a corollary of his apparent lack of background in Greek thought. Most if not all of the "anti-rationalists" discussed in Wolin's book were either Greek scholars (Nietzsche, Gadamer) or well trained in the classics. The ostensibly reactionary return to the Greeks that Wolin discerns is in fact a clue to the development of a richer and more *reasonable* conception of reason.

And this leads me to a final criticism. In order to get back to the Greeks in a fruitful way, one must first come to terms with Heidegger. I mean by this that Heidegger both brings the Greeks to life and distorts them. To study Heidegger is thus like walking a tight-rope. There is also something like this in what we still call "ordinary language philosophy," by which I refer not to the later Wittgenstein but to the movement stimulated by persons like Moore, Ryle, Austin, and Grice. Here we find ourselves very near to Aristotelian commonsense reasoning, but a type of reasoning that is separated in its interior from Aristotelian theory and in fact is decisively influenced by the very technicism it purports to avoid. But that is a speculation for another day. What needs to be said here is that Wolin is not good at taking seriously the people he dislikes. He seems to lack the ability, or in any event the will, to think through the ways in which the representatives of anti-Enlightenment were correct. As a single example, there can be no doubt that humanism, liberalism, and a rational democracy are endangered by the uncontrollable aspects of technology. Simply because Heidegger links his critique of technology to a peculiarly romantic form of religion and a denunciation of the Enlightenment, that does not invalidate the force of the critique itself. Nevertheless, I want to insist that there are very good things in Wolin's book, and indeed, that it is often politically sound in a way that conservatives should take more seriously than I suspect they do. But it is not sufficiently penetrating or—dare I say it?—radical.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Postmodernism and the Possibility of Critical Thinking

The expression *critical thinking* is charged with a heavy burden of historical baggage. It was not so long ago that modernists were referring to theirs as an age of criticism, thus striking, perhaps unconsciously, a note of decayed Kantianism. The role of the critic, as is evident from the etymology of the term, is to discriminate between better and worse. The etymology is Greek, but there is a modern pedigree as well, going back to Milton, who says in the *Areopagitica* that "reason is but choosing." For the ancient as well as for the early modern, choice is rational if one chooses well. The tangled history of modernity has unfortunately tended to result in a suppression of the judgment of better and worse from the act of judgment, which culminates in our ostensibly postmodern age in the mere expression of difference. Even further it is now not the reader but the text that acts as critic, which is accordingly transformed into ontological excitation. Criticism is no longer rational choice but what might be called uncritical crisis. How did we arrive at this hyperbolical and antirationalist stage? In the following paragraphs, I offer a few suggestions.

The contemporary version of the postmodernist phenomenon has its origins in the doctrines of Nietzsche. One of the most striking manifestations of that phenomenon is the current debate about the end of philosophy. More sharply stated, the debate takes its bearings by the widespread agreement that the age of metaphysics (philosophy in the traditional sense) is over. According to this understanding of the term *metaphysics*, the classical doctrine of two worlds, or of eternity and temporality, as represented by the orthodox interpretation of Platonism on the one hand and the Judeo-Christian tradition on the other, has been overcome, or less melodramatically,

has withered away. Modernity is consequently understood as the historical process of that overcoming or withering away. It follows, however, that if the process is complete, then modernity has itself withered away, or suppressed itself. We therefore presumably stand, at the very least, upon the threshold of the postmodern epoch, or, to paraphrase Nietzsche, with one foot beyond the world of modernity. If this account of things is correct, two further conclusions may be drawn. The first is that our transitional situation allows us to understand the recently concluded modern epoch from outside, or beyond, and hence, presumably, more accurately than was previously the case. The second is that, poised as we are at the threshold of some new epoch, with, so to speak, one foot in the air, we are still free to decide the direction in which to move.

This little sketch of the present moment raises a number of questions. The first is whether the expression *postmodernist* has any discernible cognitive content. This in turn depends upon our understanding of modernity itself. For it is entirely possible that the experience (or rhetoric) of postmodernism is itself a characteristic phenomenon of modernity. The second question turns upon the sense of the expression *metaphysics*. This notoriously ambiguous word has its philological origins in Aristotle, or rather in his editors, and may be nothing more than a librarian's term of classification ("the writings coming after, or placed next to, the writings on physics"). Even if this explanation is false or inadequate, the fact remains that modern critics of metaphysics, or speakers for its demise, improperly derive the sense of the term from Plato, and it is an open question whether they are entitled to do so. What is normally referred to by scholars as "Plato's theory of ideas," the ostensible basis for the two-worlds doctrine, is not to be found in the Platonic dialogues. What we find instead is a variety of extremely ambiguous and inconsistent conversations, in the form of questions and answers, about the relation between forms and their instances, in more than one sense of the term *form*. Postmetaphysicians pride themselves upon their hermeneutical subtlety, and their capacity to hear the unspoken and deeper dimension underneath the spoken or superficial stratum of the written text. Yet they are singularly

unable to exercise this hermeneutical skill in the case of the Platonic dialogues. Their interpretation of the two-worlds doctrine is as superficial and hence philosophically inaccurate as that of the most unimaginative philologist. A third question might be raised concerning the accuracy of Nietzsche's interpretation of Christianity, an interpretation which, as I have suggested, is today extremely influential among postmodernists. Is Christianity intelligible as a taking of vengeance against, and hence a devaluing of, the created world? Do we do justice to the Christian doctrine of love by understanding it as the will to power? Fourth: If metaphysics has not been overcome until the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century what is the difference between antiquity and modernity as conventionally defined? Fifth: If we do indeed stand outside the modern epoch, perhaps, as so detached (or partially detached), we understand *modernity less well*, rather than better, than its surpassed residents. Finally, is it not true that those who stand with one foot in the air run a grave risk of falling on their faces?

No doubt this list of questions could be extended, but it is a fair representation of the difficulties raised by contemporary discussions of postmodernity. The avid postmodernist might perhaps object that my questions are themselves outmoded consequences of modernity or even of metaphysics, or of the former, scientifically articulated, will to power which valued clarity, rationality, and common sense. I believe that there is a very simple reply to objections of this sort. The advocates of postmodernism themselves distinguish in their practice between criticism and refutation of metaphysics and modernity on the one hand, and the articulation (if that is the right word) of postmodernist texts on the other. When attempting to persuade us that philosophy is at an end, the postmodernists talk, or attempt to talk, *our* language. Only after we are persuaded do we ourselves begin to chant postmodernism. In this essay, I am concerned with one question: is the thesis of the end of philosophy and so of modernity, sound? I shall have no interest at all in the ostensible ontological profundities of the Marquis de Sade, the presumed superiority of difference to sameness, or other preferred topics of the postmodern school(s). In other words, I shall accept

the thesis, for the purpose of discussion, that we are at the threshold of a new age, and that, with one foot beyond modernity we can discuss intelligently what is to be done. I shall not, however, accept without argument the thesis that the new age we attend is postmodern. On the contrary it is my view and the view which I shall here defend, that there is no valid distinction between the modern and the postmodern, but that the actual distinction lies between the ancient and the modern.

A crucial preliminary point needs to be made. I am not a spokesman for antiquity or an advocate of a return to the past. This form of inverted historicism holds no appeal for me. A criticism of this or that aspect of modernity is not equivalent to a rejection of modernity. The decisive consideration is this: the rejection of modernity is a typically modern phenomenon. The ancients did not comment on the merits or defects of the moderns. It is modern man who dwells perpetually within epochal contrasts, whether in the form of longing for the past or dreaming of the future, flitting from one historical period to another on the wings of imagination. The apparent exception to this remark is, in my opinion, a sign of its soundness. I am thinking here of doctrines of commitment, resolve, and genuineness as manifested in a project. These doctrines advocate a termination of nostalgia or dreaming, and a settling down within the fundamental circumstances of one's own time. But they, too, grant the transience of commitments and projects, or their epochal, historical nature. On the one hand, commitment to a project is a simulacrum of eternity, or an admission that man cannot exist as a radically historical being. On the other hand, it is a self-conscious attempt to *forget* the truth about radical finitude, an attempt which can be undertaken only by someone who recognizes, or believes himself to recognize, that the truth of historicity is nihilism.

Modernity arises as a project, namely, as the conscious rejection (by a few remarkable individuals) of antiquity. The subsequent rejection of modernity is then simply a reenactment of the institution of modernity. To say this is not in itself to condemn the spirit of modernity. Perhaps human beings are so constituted that starting afresh is necessary and salutary for them. Whether or not this is so,

I want to suggest that there are two, and exactly two, fundamental human situations, represented only from the modern perspective by the quarrel between the ancients and moderns. Once we leave the ancient or classical epoch, there is no return, except by a forgetfulness induced by something like the eternal return of the same. We cannot induce forgetfulness of this sort by an existential resolve. Let me illustrate this by a brief consideration of the thesis, associated with Heidegger, that technology is the current manifestation of the will to power. What possibilities are available to us with respect to technology? First, we may use it, consciously or inadvertently, to destroy ourselves. Self-destruction will lead to an escape from modernity, but it is not an entrance into the post or premodern epoch. Second, we may continue in our attempts to master nature or, in the Heideggerian jargon, to cover over Being by the dominance of beings. By definition, this will produce an extension of modernity. Third, we may change our attitude toward technology not so as to reject it (which would not be a "genuine" response to the concrete historical situation), but rather to shift from the modality of domination (and hence covering over of Being) to that of letting be, namely, to assisting in the process by which Being reveals itself, if only in the disguise of the ontic articulation of a new epoch. But what precisely does this mean?

Since technology is human activity, designed explicitly to modify nature in terms of human desire, how can we reorient ourselves toward technology in a postmodern, postmetaphysical, nondominant sense? We are not here searching for a Marxist, or quasi-Marxist transformation of human society in such a way that human beings will no longer exploit one another with the assistance of technological artifacts. Such a transformation, assuming it to be desirable and possible, would not be a surpassing, but rather a fulfillment, of modernity, or at least of one centrally important aspect of the dream of modernity. What sense does it make to speak of the fulfillment of modernity as a surpassing of modernity, or an entrance into the postmodern? None at all, I submit. The essence of modernity is to remove restrictions to the human will. A shift from one restriction to another is not a suppression of modernity. And restrictions will not

be entirely suppressed with the withering away of the state. To state only the melodramatic instance, men will still face the restriction of morality itself, or of death.

It is not a social resolution, then, for which we search, but rather an ontological one. Now I must confess that I am unable to attach any positive significance to the thesis that such an ontological resolution is possible. Either art completes nature or it reconstitutes, that is, creates, nature. The first alternative is the thesis of the ancients; the second is the thesis of modernity. There is no postmodern attitude toward technology because (as is admitted by the view under attack) technology is itself, or is the expression of, the essence of modernity. One way in which to understand the current fuss about the postmodern is as panic induced by the recognition of the enigmatic and deeply unsatisfying nature, as well as the inescapability (by any route short of self-destruction) of modernity. The contemporary attitude toward technology may serve as the paradigm of this panic. I disregard, of course, those for whom technology presents no problem, since for such persons the entire problem of the modern and postmodern is invisible. As for the rest of us, we may be divided into two main camps. The first is made up of those who fear technology, more or less explicitly, whether because of its effects on the soul or because of its dangers to the body. The second includes all those who have sublimated their panic into an aggressive optimism, articulated by the rhetoric of existential commitment, and solaced by science fiction. For both camps, the present is either intolerable or deeply menacing. Since the only way to return to the past is by projecting it into the future, the result is a diversified yet essentially homogeneous obsession with the "next" historical epoch.

Obsession with history is a necessary consequence of the will to recreate and thereby master nature. It is also a version of metaphysics, if by that term we mean a doctrine of two worlds, or of a radical distinction between eternity and temporality, between essence and appearance. The doctrine of radical historicity assures us that eternity is unthinkable or inaccessible. It thereby transforms historicity itself, whether understood as Being or as the filter through which Being "drips" into eternity and essence. Each finite historical

epoch is an appearance of the essence of Being; the structure of meaning secreted by a radical existential commitment is a simulacrum of eternity. If we put to one side such exotic flora as Plato's so-called theory of ideas or Aristotle's divine intellect, one can say that the ancients were as unmetaphysical a people as ever lived. A genuine overcoming of metaphysics would return us to the world of the Greek gods and the polis. But no such overcoming is possible. As an amusing sign of this, I point to the effort by the positivist movement of the 20s to abolish metaphysics. If the reader will permit an unorthodox comparison. I would liken, say, Rudolph Carnap to Descartes, with the radical difference that Carnap was not faced with the need to institute a revolution against theology, and consequently never developed an interesting rhetoric. However this may be, the fruits of positivism, as we now know, are the essentialist metaphysics of modal logic, a Proustian emphasis upon the "ways of world-making," and a two-worlds doctrine of logical satisfaction as distinguished from the cognitively inaccessible domain of meaning. To make the same point in a slightly different way, the current popularity of surrealism and dadaism in the philosophy of science, which is derived from the writings of the later Wittgenstein, has its deeper cause in the bankruptcy of the effort to banish self-consciousness or reflection from a rational analysis of modern science.

Whatever one's objections to Cartesian dualism, understood in the superficial sense as the radical distinction between mind and body, there is, in my opinion, no escape from the dualism of will and formal structure. When my hard-headed contemporaries object to the assertion that science is metaphysics, or the will to power, they silence these slogans by force of their will, as, for example, by the brute (or subtle) exercise of academic power and not by argument. Voltaire "refuted" Christianity by laughing at it. Positivists and their progeny attempted to refute metaphysics by laughing at it. Now the laugh is on them. Laughter is no doubt refreshing for the soul, and it has important political consequences. The same can be said of spiritual fatigue and boredom. In the academy, the current split between the hardheaded professors and those who dance to

softer muses is a metaphysical battle between two versions of the damage done to the human soul by its inescapable impetus toward freedom from restrictions. This impetus leads both to exhilaration and fatigue, sometimes within the same breast, and often in the most subtle of blends. We acquire immunity from these ultimately debilitating moods not through the freedom of infinite progress *or* of radical finitude but through the loss of self-consciousness, and hence of freedom in any meaningful sense.

In this necessarily circumscribed format, I have now indicated how I would respond to three of the six questions directed towards advocates of postmodernism or the end of metaphysics. To summarize the answer to the first question concerning whether the expression *postmodernist* has any discernible cognitive content: the difference between the ancients and the moderns is that, for the ancients, art completes nature, whereas for the moderns, art creates nature. There is no valid or sound cognitive content to the notion of postmodernism, which is itself a typically modern slogan. And metaphysics cannot be refuted by exposing the logical flaws or existential inconveniences of the doctrine of two worlds, because man is, by his self-conscious nature, a two-worlds being. I have also implied an answer to the fourth question about the difference between antiquity and modernity. Since we are all always either standing with one foot in the air or falling on our faces, dragging ourselves erect to some slightly different location, and raising our feet, there is not much difference between freedom and stumbling about in the dark. The answer to a fifth question (about whether or not we understand modernity better than the surpassed residents of modernity understood it) follows trivially from my previous answers. Since none of us is "outside" modernity, the question is misleadingly posed. But if some of us could extricate ourselves from modernity we would promptly lose consciousness and hence fail to understand anything at all. The one question which I have not attempted to answer concerns the nature of Christianity. I would prefer to leave this question to those who are far more competent than I to deal with it. Nevertheless, I will venture the opinion that Nietzsche's interpretation of Christianity is initially tempting but finally wrong and inadequate.

This interpretation is tempting, of course, not to Christians, but to those who have not been touched by that religion, to those who have broken away from it, and to the hard-headed who suppose that religious faith can be refuted, whether by argument or sociological observation, by psychological analysis or mockery.

There is, then, no end to metaphysics and certainly no end to philosophy. Man is by his nature the philosophical animal, and never more so than when he attempts to overcome himself. In this sense, I agree with Nietzsche's observation in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* that man is an unfinished animal. This observation was certainly intended as a rejection of ancient philosophy, understood by Nietzsche as a doctrine of finished ends (or "values") and natural essences. To take Nietzsche's paradigmatic example, the distinction within the Platonic dialogues between the ideas, or pure forms, on the one hand, and the world of genesis on the other, both set an artificial limit to man's development and devalued the historical world. I cannot enter here into the extremely difficult question of the true sense of the doctrine of ideas. I do want, however, to make a remark about the distinction between the ideas and genesis that is appropriate to the present discussion, in which our emphasis is upon politics in the broadest sense of the term.

The political sense of the doctrine of ideas is that it serves to define the revolutionary nature of philosophy. The point is entirely obvious in Plato's *Republic,* and especially in the famous allegory of the cave. However, the fundamental difference between classical, or Platonic, and modern, or Cartesian, revolution is that the first is theoretical whereas the second is practical. Most obviously, Socrates rebels against Greek tradition and universal common sense in his verbal founding of the ostensibly just city, which is, however, not an open society in the modern sense but an incarnation of the difference between the few and the many, or the philosophers and the nonphilosophers. The revolution, so to speak, is stopped in its tracks even as it occurs. In the Cartesian revolution, on the other hand, a great show is made of the compatibility between the new science and the old theology. The revolution is ostensibly technical or methodological; but this in itself is a practical revolution, and one which leads

inevitably to an open society of progressive science and technology. To state this as concisely as possible, the technician is the mediator between the theoretician and the nontheoretician. Granting that the shift from Platonic to Cartesian science is theoretical, it gives rise to a practical revolution that is entirely non-Platonic. The split between the philosophers and the nonphilosophers is overcome in principle. And this is the basis of modern doctrines of egalitarianism, to be brought about not merely by the withering away of the state, but by genetic engineering and, in general, by science.

The theoretical nature of the Platonic revolution does not, however, amount to a rejection of the Nietzschean thesis that man is an unfinished animal. In the first place, that revolution takes place in speech, not in deed. Socrates makes it all but explicit that the city he describes is virtually impossible. He leaves it to our judgment whether it is, in fact, as he claims, the city that all just men wish for. Wishing is the symbol for unfinished business. Let me try to restate this point in a slightly different manner. The nonphilosophers must be restricted by education and force, not because they are finished, but because they can *never* be finished. They are radically incomplete. On this point, I see no difference at all between Plato and Nietzsche. Plato, however, infers from the radical incompleteness of the nonphilosopher, the political destructiveness of what we now call historical progress. Nietzsche aside, the difference between Plato and the typical contemporary thinker is, from Plato's standpoint, that between liberty and libertinism. Turning now to the philosophers, it must be said that they, too, are incomplete, if in a different sense from the nonphilosophers. Socrates makes it explicit in the dialogue that wisdom is impossible for human beings. The highest stage accessible to man is philosophy, or the love, which is also a lack, of wisdom. Passing over the paradoxical aspects of this thesis (properly noted by Hegel), its relevance for us is plain. Philosophers know that they are incomplete and attempt to rectify this deficiency while taking prudent steps to limit the dangerous consequences of the attempt to become complete. Nietzsche, on the contrary shouts out from the rooftops human incompleteness, and transforms into the highest nobility the impetus to accomplish in

and *upon* the public (or the body politic) the uncompletable and hence extraordinarily dangerous revolution—and this despite his regular, exaggeratedly Platonic denunciation of the many.

This brief comparison between Plato and Nietzsche was intended, among other things, to illustrate the following principle. No one believes more strongly than I that an accurate knowledge of a philosophical teaching depends upon a minute and comprehensive analysis of the body of relevant texts. Nevertheless, from time to time it is necessary for us to raise our heads from the texts and to attempt to grasp in the broadest possible terms the nature of the teaching to which we address ourselves. (I am well aware that the picture I am painting consists of very broad strokes, however, I contend that it is accurate in the sense that it conforms to the standards appropriate to pictures painted in broad strokes.) One cannot understand the specific technical points of a philosophical teaching if one has no idea of the role they play within the overall conception of the philosopher in question. For our present purposes, then, one cannot understand the difference between antiquity and modernity unless one is able to distinguish between specific methodologies, arguments, and technical terminologies on the one hand, and the fundamental intentions of the philosopher on the other.

This same principle applies in the case of attempts to distinguish between one modern philosophical doctrine and another. The reader may well have been asking himself, as he has considered the preceding paragraphs, whether there is not a difference between this or that modern school, even if I am right in denying the sense of distinction between the modern and the postmodern. There are such differences. It is also true that any effort to enforce a precise distinction between ancient and modern teachings on a basis of chronology will fail. To give only one example among many, the political teaching of Rousseau contains crucial elements of Platonism. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to see the difference between Rousseau and Plato. One could also say that my previous comparison between Descartes and Carnap, even at the broadest level, is marred by the presence of Scholastic or for that matter Platonic elements in the Cartesian teaching. I would reply simply that the distance from Duns Scotus

(to say nothing of Plato) to Descartes is infinitely great, while the distance from Descartes to Carnap is finite. The most pedestrian reading of Descartes and Carnap will not fail to observe that, however important their technical and theoretical differences, they are united in their attempt to mathematicize the world. Again at the level of the pedestrian, suppose it is objected that God plays a crucial role in Cartesian metaphysics but is entirely absent from Carnapian metaphysics. I do not need to reply with a complex argument that denies any but a rhetorical importance to the Cartesian God. Let us assume that Descartes was a devout Catholic, and sincerely believed that God guarantees clear and distinct ideas, and so, too, the entire edifice of mathematical physics. This belief is philosophically and historically irrelevant, when we raise up our heads to look at the broad picture. Within the broad picture, the "project" of mathematicizing the world is an act of the human will which makes God, sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, a *superfluous hypothesis.* As soon as the Cartesian revolution occurs, God is effectively dead, whether or not all members of that revolution are believers.

To turn to another example, we are today living through a quarrel, not between the ancients and the moderns, but between two modern schools who for purposes of convenience (and in keeping with their own slogans) may be characterized as the analysts and the continentalists. I have no doubt that this distinction is an absurd one. In the first place, philosophical analysis originated not at Oxford or Harvard but on the European continent. In the second place, phenomenologists, existentialists, and the rest who are classified under the rubric of "continental thinkers" engage in just as much analysis as do the self-styled analysts. Third and more important, both camps are at heart closely united by a fundamental historicism; both are in a process of continuous decay, with the result that the quarrel is turning, at an ever increasing rate, into a mixture and even in some cases a marriage (if only of convenience). Yet who would wish to deny that there are many differences of intention, method, and terminology between the analysts and the continentalists? I myself would go a step further. Disregarding the differences among them,

if Quine, Davidson, Kripke, Rawls, and Searle, let us say, were to determine the future development of academic philosophy (for this is the extent of their power), the results would be quite different from those which might follow from the dominance of Habermas, Derrida, Deleuze, and (to name an American neocontinentalist) Rorty. I grant all of this. Nevertheless, it is all irrelevant from the standpoint of the present discussion. It may be true that, explicitly or implicitly, the analysts as a group place greater emphasis upon logic, mathematics, and natural science than do the continentalists as a group. But the continentalists are not advocating the abolition of science or a return to the classical view that art completes nature. What they are instead doing is placing a greater emphasis than the analysts upon the role of the will in the modern project. The logical analysis of the language of intentionality, whatever its technical interest, is a radical misunderstanding of the philosophical significance of the will, which is better addressed by Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power however vague and even illogical that doctrine may be.

Speaking in very general but widely admitted terms, analytical philosophy is itself divided into two camps, originating, more or less, in the writings of the early and the later Wittgenstein. Early analysis is a continuation of the positivist tradition, which in turn descends to us from the mathematical side of the Cartesian revolution. Later analysis rejects positivism in favor of a broader conception of human language, a conception which descends to us from the Cartesian doctrine of the priority of the will to the intellect. If this last point is not as immediately clear as the former, let the reader compare the Cartesian thesis on eternal truths with the later Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics, or, more generally, with his doctrine of rules. The bridge between the two apparently disparate dimensions of Descartes's teaching, and the corresponding two schools of contemporary analytical philosophy, is Kant. Kant attempts to reconcile the doctrine of the autonomy of the human will and the mathematical, or rule-governed, paradigm of rationality. Without going into the details, it is plain that his reconciliation depends upon two crucial theses. The first is the

distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal (let us say crudely between the knowable and the unknowable), and the second is the eternal validity of classical mathematics and physics. The retention of the first thesis in the temporalized form of historicism or linguistic relativism, and the rejection of the second thesis, under the impetus of non-Euclidean geometries, relativity physics, and deviate logics, reduces the theoretical differences between the two major contemporary schools of analytical philosophy to a point of rhetoric or ideology. The penchant of one camp for formalisms, and of the other for epigrams and charming literary interpretations, is theoretically insignificant. Analytical philosophy is moving steadily toward surrender to continentalism, regardless of temporary local deviations due to academic custom or power politics. This is of course *not* to say that interest in formalism will disappear, but however rather that such interest is *already* understood by the majority in terms of the dominance of the will, or, as it is sometimes called today, of human creativity. If then we are capable of lifting our noses up from our logic texts or our treatises on the new hermeneutics for a long enough time to survey the comprehensive situation, I submit that the view is clear. Contemporary fashions are variations on the central theme of modernity, which was well stated by Fichte: freedom is higher than being. These words might well serve as the motto of the later Wittgenstein, as well as of the contemporary successors of Carnap and Russell.

Nothing I have said thus far is intended as a denial of the obvious fact that we are living in an age of rapid transition. The most I would claim is that the rapidity of the transition is a typical sign of Modernism. Another way to put the point is in terms of technology. We are currently obsessed with technique and its correlative, methodology, whether we count ourselves as disciples of the hard or the soft muses. For reasons which would have to be considered with great care, we are now undergoing a technical explosion, and one which is, to put it mildly, not always marked by theoretical reflection. As a central example, I cite the case of mathematical logic, set theory and closely related branches of mathematics. When one reads the masters in this series of disciplines, Cantor, Frege, Russell, Brouwer,

Hilbert, Skolem, and Gödel, to note some of the most important names, one sees at once that they are philosophers and not merely technicians. Mathematical analysis is in the service of deep philosophical investigation, touching upon the most comprehensive problems of thinking, intelligibility, and human nature. One of the most important questions of our generation, a question which is not raised by the most fashionable descendants of the aforementioned masters, is why the production of technical artifacts has replaced philosophical speculation in the philosophy of mathematics.

This rage for technical innovation has also engulfed the humanists among us, as is patent in the current popularity of hermeneutics with its often preposterous emphasis upon methods, technical terms, and a dehumanized textualism. It is interesting to note that technicist hermeneutics is no longer the center of attention in Paris, where much of the most extreme work of this sort originated. The center of hermeneutics is now the United States, the land *par excellence* of technology. What used to be called "literary criticism" has at last reached the exalted status of mathematically oriented economics, in which imaginary technical artifacts (models in the one case, texts in the other) replace commonsense observation of what is actually happening, or what has actually been written. If one takes a sufficiently broad view, there is a deep relationship between, say, the efforts of Robert McNamara and his associates to run the American government, and specifically the war in Vietnam, by computers, and the efforts by structuralists, poststructuralists, and deconstructivists to detach works of art from their creators and consequently from their readers. To say that the text has a life of its own, independent of the intentionality of the author or the reader, is to identify life with abstract structures and, in this sense, is like treating the mathematical model of reality apart from the reality. In order to be more than provocative, this analogy would have to be spelled out at much greater length than I have space for. I must therefore rest content with the possibility that the reader will be provoked into a consideration of the analogy between rule-governed thinking, or the technologizing of reason, and the suppression of common sense from the art of reading a book or interpreting a work of art.

On all fronts, then, the whirling dervishes of methodology have produced intense currents of change. They have also provoked countermovements, from neoconservatism and the moral majority to a perceptible recognition among academicians that technical process without moral sensibility, and indeed moral responsibility is inadequate and destructive. One could perhaps wish that these quarrels were conducted at a deeper level of theoretical understanding. But whatever genius has been invested in this quarrel is technical, and hence not postmodern. Modernity is the age of *technē*. There is no technical exit, no exit at all other than death or total self-destructiveness. But this means that we cannot return to antiquity. What is required, if I am not mistaken, is the same as in any epoch, whatever name we give to the epoch itself: we must first understand who we are before we do something about who we should like to be.

The reader may protest that I am taking refuge in a platitude. Let me close this essay with the attempt to defend myself against such a charge. As more fully developed, the charge runs something like this: The modern period, from Montaigne to Kant, is defined by a central concern with the question, "Who am I?" Post-Kantian idealism may accordingly be understood as the transformation of the empirical "I" into the absolute ego. The deconstruction of the ego by Nietzsche and Freud simply continues the work of idealism, except that the absolute ego is now understood as the subconscious self, or id. Nietzsche and Freud thus represent the transition from the modern to the postmodern period, in which latter the absolute is no longer divine but subhuman. From this standpoint, the development of postmodernism during the past seventy-five years has been the process by which the subhuman (i.e., will to power, instinct, libido) is generalized into the nonhuman (formal structure of cybernetics on the one hand, poststructural deconstructivism on the other). The net result is the suppression of psychologism, subjectivity, and, in general, anthropocentrism.

The first thing to be said in reply to this charge is that the question "Who am I?" is also central to antiquity, and hence to Platonism. The view under inspection is thus an alternate version of the thesis that

the modern epoch is an extension of Platonism. Metaphysics is then presumably essentially related to, if not identical with, subjectivism, anthropocentrism, and what Nietzsche calls perspectivism. It follows easily that an obsession with the ego deteriorates into egomania and consequently into the will to power. But the will to power, as is plain from the examples of Nietzsche and Freud, is also the suppression of the ego. The net result is that the tripartition of ancient/modern/postmodern disappears; or rather it is itself transformed from a rigid articulation of history into a dialectical process *continuous* with history. The surface structure of history is then rigid and illusory, the deep structure is dialectical: *all* European history, or at least European history from Socrates onward, is then postmodern! However, if we accept the radical distinction, insisted upon by Nietzsche and Heidegger, between the pre-Socratics and Socrates, then it becomes more coherent, even by dialectical standards, to reestablish the distinction between the ancient and the modern epoch, with the essential proviso that Socrates is the first modern man. It is not dialectical, but nonsensical, to describe *all* of European history as postmodern. And the characteristic doctrines of the adherents of postmodernism dissolve the conventional distinction between antiquity and modernity in such a way as to establish an essential, if dialectical, continuity between the result of that dissolution and themselves.

Let me repeat the main point here. The will to power, ostensibly the essential feature of the modern (i.e., ancient plus modern) epoch is also, as the deconstruction of the ego, the essential feature of the postmodern epoch. For once the ego is entirely suppressed, so too is history whether in the sense of "story" or historicity. Whatever the source of the structure of their intentionality, the protagonists in a story are self-conscious egos. It is hardly by accident that postmodern fiction frowns on the story or the view that works of art are extensions of human experience. If there is such a phenomenon as postmodernism, then it is the abyss beyond the end of history. Let us call it the day of judgment, even if one upon which there are no more judges and no one to be judged. Whether in speculative philosophy or the mathematical sciences, an excess of ontologizing

leads to the dissolution, not to the saving, of the phenomena. To say this, however, is not to be committed to a return of the conventional rigidities of the distinction between the ancients and the moderns. From the deepest standpoint, which coincides with the surface of things, it is of no ultimate importance whether Socrates or Montaigne is to count as the first modern man. What counts is man (the counting animal), and hence the question "Who am I?" As Heidegger himself points out, this is the proper formulation of the question "What is man?"

Whether in a conventional or in an orthodox sense, we need to reestablish what should never have been overlooked, what can be disregarded but never suppressed apart from self-destruction. The ostensible deconstruction of the ego is in fact an answer to the question: "Who am I?" The answer may vary in its specific words, but in one way or another it repeats the Odyssean reply: "no one." In the *Odyssey*, however, this reply is a conscious concealment, one which represents in miniature Homer's concealed representation of the fundamental truth about man in the persona of *Odysseus*. If there is a postmodern epoch, its assertion of "no one" is not a conscious concealment, but rather the conscious assertion of nihilism. Postmodernism, even on this account, is then the attempt to assert Nietzsche's doctrine of noble nihilism while suppressing nobility. Once again, it stands identified as a defective version of modernism.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Mind and Body in Nietzsche

I want today to defend the claim that Nietzsche's account of the relation between the spirit and the body is incoherent. My point, however, is not at all that Nietzsche is incoherent because he fails to adhere to the canons of modern scientific rationalism or the laws of logic. On the contrary, the difficulty lies precisely in his adherence to what are today standard views of scientific materialism. Nietzsche is a precursor of the contemporary philosophers of neurobiology. He is of course much more than this, and what makes him particularly difficult to understand is not a narrowness of focus but rather the universality of his rhetoric.

Otherwise stated, Nietzsche gives an oddly poetic twist to the rhetoric of science, in a way somehow reminiscent of Lucretius. But whereas for Lucretius, poetry is the sugar-coating that makes the bitter medicine of science palatable to children, for Nietzsche it is the medicine itself. In a word, Nietzsche makes explicit, and develops in full the consequences of the view that is only implicit in the rhetoric of modern science. If man is the maker, *homo faber*, then the world is a work of art, not a natural order. But this in turn leads inevitably to the thesis that the human being is itself an artifact. Human creativity is an illusion: the world is a work of art that makes itself. Spirit is reduced to body, which in turn is identified as spirit.

So much for the thesis that underlies this paper. I turn now to the essential details. The modern Enlightenment is characterized by two main themes. The first is the celebration of freedom and the second is faith in science. The two themes are united in the conviction that scientific progress is the most powerful guarantee of freedom. This conviction is sometimes expressed as the belief that progress in scientific rationalism brings with it moral and political progress as well. In the late 20th century, despite considerable evidence to the contrary, the conviction is still widely held, but it is rapidly

being eroded by the undesirable but unavoidable consequences of scientific rationalism itself. Stated as briefly as possible, the mathematical paradigm of rationality is incapable of demonstrating rationally its own goodness and nobility. It must therefore have recourse for self-justification to the same poetical rhetoric that it condemns as unreasonable and unscientific. Nietzsche understood this clearly but was unable to avoid succumbing to the very crisis he so brilliantly describes. In a real sense, the brilliant description is itself the crisis.

Here is a simple statement of the elements of the crisis. In order to free human beings from spiritual and material bondage, it is necessary to overthrow traditional religion and philosophy. In the original Enlightenment version, this revolution did not require a complete repudiation of eternity but only its reinterpretation in the light of mathematical physics. By the middle of the 19th century, however, the process of the replacement of eternity by history was well under way. Mathematical physics, as I noted a moment ago, is morally and politically neutral; it cannot function as a basis for distinctions of good and evil or nobility and baseness. For this reason, the great figures of the Enlightenment were already forced to look to history and what we now call cultural anthropology for confirmation of their views on human nature. Especially important in this connection are Montesquieu and Rousseau.

But these investigations introduced diversity rather than establishing the uniformity of natural laws. I cannot go into the details of how the eternity of classical physics was gradually historicized. Suffice it to say that Nietzsche, despite his relative ignorance of the natural sciences (as distinct from philology), is a crucial figure in the acceleration of this process. Whereas many of Nietzsche's 19th century contemporaries emphasized the historicity of reason, Nietzsche extended historicity to nature as well. If time permitted, it would be interesting to consider how Nietzsche constitutes an extension and partial reinterpretation of Hegel in this respect.

But this is by the way. The important point for us is that Nietzsche brings together in an uneasy alliance the moral neutrality

of mathematical science and the destruction of traditional values that was accelerated by the spread of historicism. The peculiar feature of Nietzsche's alliance, however, is that he affirms both the nihilistic consequences of science and history, or in other words the modern Enlightenment, as well as the necessity for this destruction of the European tradition, and with it, of course, the Enlightenment itself, in order to free humanity for the creation of new, vital, and above all, noble, values.

Let me repeat this important point. The decadence of late modern Europe is for Nietzsche due to the intrinsically destructive nature of the Enlightenment. The only way in which to escape from this destruction is to accelerate it, or to plunge Europe into the night in which all cows are black, to borrow an expression applied by Hegel to Schelling. Whereas Nietzsche does not go so far as to adopt the Hegelian negation of negation, he does indulge in the hope, to be repeated by the Weathermen and other terrorists of the 1960s, that only a complete destruction of traditional European culture will make possible the creation of new values, somewhat inconsistently associated by Nietzsche with the re-establishment of an aristocratic rank-ordering of the types of the human spirit.

Nietzsche thus asserts simultaneously the positive and the negative consequences of modern scientific rationalism. It destroys the foundation for value, but in so doing, it frees us from enervated or ignoble values and thereby gives us the chance to create something virile and noble. The problem should now be obvious. All differences in rhetoric to one side, and despite the radical differences in the two conceptions of a desirable form of human life, Nietzsche affirms the truth of scientific rationalism. In so doing, he empties human life of significance and reduces the process of creating values and rank-orderings to the level of the telling of noble lies. With all due caution for the dangers of oversimplification, we may represent the difference between Nietzsche and Socrates as follows: The latter explains what is needed in guarded terms to a small number of friends, whereas Nietzsche shouts his instructions at the top of his voice to everyone within earshot.

It will not do to say that Socrates was a conservative whereas Nietzsche was a radical. In fact, to say this is nonsense, since Socrates introduces the most radical revolution in the history of philosophy, namely, the doctrine of the philosopher-king, whereas Nietzsche adheres to the old-fashioned conception of the artist-warrior of the Renaissance. What we can say is that different historical circumstances demand different rhetorical weapons. Nietzsche himself explains this point very nicely in the following two texts. The first: "why it is today necessary temporarily to speak and act coarsely. Something fine and discreet is no longer intelligible, not even by those who are related to us. *Whatever one does not say loudly and even scream, is not there...*" (*KSA* 12:1[134], p. 41).[1] This passage from 1885/86 should be taken together with the following remark of 1880: "It is, alas, impossible *to be effective* with the language of truth: rhetoric is required, that is to say, the old habit of being *moved* only by certain words and motives, rules and demands the concealment of truth" (*KSA* 9:4[246], pp. 160–1).

I turn now more directly to the relation between mind and spirit as described by Nietzsche. It will be useful to begin this section of my paper by reminding you of the difference between the spirit-body problem and its contemporary version, the mind-body problem. The mind is the penultimate residue of the historical process in which soul is transformed into spirit, and spirit in turn degenerates into the ego, subject, self, and *id*. One finds the results of this process already in Nietzsche, as for example in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part I, Section 17 (*KSA* V, p. 31): "A thought comes when 'it' will, and not when 'I' will, so that it is a falsification of the situation to say: the subject 'I' is the condition for the predicate 'think.' It thinks [*Es denkt*]." And Nietzsche goes on to say that the "it" is not a disguised form of the grammatical "I" but an interpretation of the process of thinking, and nothing more than that.

I said a moment ago that mind is the penultimate residue of the steady reduction of soul to narrower and continuously more anonymous identities. The ultimate consequence is of course the computer program, or the "software" that captures in digital patterns the physiological process of the firing of nerve cells in the brain. This

is an advance on Nietzsche, but it is not a change in standpoint. Nietzsche is already an adherent of the physiological interpretation of the mind. As to the computer, it is for contemporary materialists an artefactual byproduct of the process of evolution, which for Nietzsche is a democratic or vulgarised version of the will to power. Whereas Nietzsche is not a Darwinian, he provides an equivalent from the science of mechanics and elaborates a physical conception of evolution as the accumulation of points of force.

Despite passages like the one just cited, Nietzsche has a more complicated version of physiological reductivism than that of our own contemporaries because he is much closer to the tradition than they. In fact, it is attacks like those launched by Nietzsche that lead to the death, not simply of God, but of the human spirit as well. When contemporary philosophers of mind attack what they call "folk psychology," they are simply extending late-modern scientific materialism to the life-world of the late-modern phenomenologist. That is to say, they replace phenomenological descriptions of everyday interpretations of life with physiological descriptions as buttressed by the disciplines of electrical engineering and computer programming. On the central point of the dissolution of consciousness into a multiplicity of cerebral functions, however, as for example in Daniel Dennett's theory of "multiple drafts," contemporary philosophers of mind remain entirely within the orbit of Nietzsche's teaching, and they leave unanswered the same question. How do the multiple and dispersed elements of cerebral activity unify into consciousness? Or, in the language of computer technology, granting that semantics can be represented syntactically, where does the semantics come from originally?[2]

For Nietzsche, however, the life-world cannot be simply eliminated by scientific analysis, because for him the point of scientific analysis is to make life not only possible but worth living. In other words, Nietzsche distinguishes between life and science by making the latter subordinate to the former. Stated in yet another way, Nietzsche must retain the spirit, the soul, the heart, the will, and the mind (not a Nietzschean term, of course) in something like their everyday forms, in order to reap the benefits that are to be derived

from the reduction of the spirit, the soul, the heart, the will, and the mind to the body. And this is impossible.

I turn now to an important text in which Nietzsche distinguishes the various properties of spirit, yet in such a way as to convey their subordination to the body, which he characterizes as *eine grosse Vernunft*, "a great reason." The text appears in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part I, Section 4, and bears the title "On the Despisers of the Body." Zarathustra begins by attributing the assertion "I am body and soul" to the child. He continues: "But the awakened and knowing say: body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body. The body is a great reason, a plurality with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a shepherd. An instrument of your body is also your little reason, my brother, which you call 'spirit'—a little instrument and toy of your great reason. 'I,' you say, and are proud of the word. But greater is that in which you do not wish to have faith—your body and its great reason: that does not say 'I,' but does 'I.'"[3]

The simplest explanation of "great reason" is to say that it is instinct (see *KSA* 13:14[111], p. 288). Somewhat more expansively, the thoughts of the little reason or intellect are produced by the acts or functions of the impulses of the body. In *Ecce Homo* ("Why I am so wise," part 6), Nietzsche gives another example of great reason: "To take oneself as a *fatum* and not to wish oneself to be 'otherwise,'—this is in such circumstances the *great reason* itself" (VI, p. 273). These two passages, when taken together, bring out another aspect of the underlying incoherence in Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche attempts to combine a Spinozist *amor fati* with the random motions of the chaos that lies at the heart of "the All" (9:11[225], p. 528).

As a further clarification of the passage from *Zarathustra*, I cite two roughly contemporaneous texts from the Notebooks of 1885/86. The first text contains a note on the plan of Nietzsche's projected masterwork. "Our intellect, our will, even our sensations are dependent upon our estimations of value: these correspond to our impulses [*Trieben*] and the conditions for their existence. Our impulses are reducible to the will to power. The will to power is the last fact in our descent," i.e., in our analysis of life to the

ground (*KSA* 11:40[61], p. 661). In the same fragment, the intellect is further described as a tool of the will to power, or, in the language of *Zarathustra*, of the body understood as great reason.

The second text reads as follows: "Out of each of our fundamental impulses arises a different perspectival evaluation of all events and life-experiences. Each of these impulses feels itself restrained with respect to each of the others, or assisted and flattered, each has its own law of development (its up and down, its tempo, etc.)—and this one dies when that one ascends. *Man as a multiplicity of 'wills to power': each with a multiplicity of modes of expression and forms*" (*KSA* 12:1[58], p. 25).

The import of these several texts can be summarised as follows. The various modalities of spirit are artifacts of physiological impulses. The ego, for example, does not think but is a construction of thinking (*KSA* 11:35[35], p. 526). Thinking, however, is the passive response by the little reason to the impulses or great reason of the body. But the physiological impulses are themselves expressions of the will to power. And similar derivations could be given for each of the faculties of spirit. Unfortunately, it is impossible to analyze the sense of the expression "will to power," since this is the name given to the last fact or foundation of all analyses. We can of course paraphrase the expression "will to power" as the accumulation and discharge of points of force. But this seems to be itself an interpretation of life, and more fundamentally still, of Becoming, as the necessary unfolding of chaos.

"Will to power": the ultimate fact and the ultimate riddle. Still, we can take one or two more steps. In the *Twilight of the Idols* (VI, "Reason" 5, p. 77), Nietzsche says of the will: "Today we know that it is only a word." This helps us to understand the note from 1886/87, entitled "Exoteric—esoteric" in which Nietzsche writes: "1.—everything is will against will. 2. There are indeed no wills. 1. Causalism. 2. There is no such thing as cause-effect" (*KSA* 12:5[9], p. 187). "Will to power" is thus an exoteric name for—what? Power? But power seems to assume two distinct forms, that of the spirit and that of the body. Why does Nietzsche insist upon the reduction of the former to the latter? And if we accept this reduction, what sense

is there in attributing interpretations, perspectives, or evaluations to the mere accumulation of points of force?

I want to cite two more texts, one from the Notebooks of 1885/86: "Who interprets? Our *Affekte*" (*KSA* 12:2[190]). The German word can be translated as "affects," "emotions," or "passions." The citation is from a discussion of interpretation as a symptom of determinate physiological conditions. Once again we confront the circle in Nietzsche's exposition. Interpretation is a function of physiology, which in turn is an expression of the will to power. But will to power is an *interpretation* of the world as the accumulation of points of force. This brings me to the second text, from the Notebooks of 1888: "every center of force has for the entire remainder [of that particular accumulation of points of force] its perspective, i.e. its entirely determinate *evaluation*" (*KSA* 13:14[184], p. 37). Every center of force has its associated interpretation. This obviously cannot be confirmed at the atomic level, nor for that matter with respect to most of the physiological excitations or impulses. But this apart, the implication is that each body is a multiplicity of interpretations. Each of the interpretations is an expression of some concatenation of sub-interpretations, i.e., of a struggle to dominate, to increase one's power at the expense of one's neighbors, to employ a political metaphor. The scientific meaning of the interpretations is thus quite different from their appearance or significance in the everyday or life world, that is, in the domain of what today's scientific Nietzscheans call "folk psychology."

More precisely, the scientific analysis of the life-world leads to the conclusion that all interpretations are consequences of the accumulation of points of force. But science is itself an interpretation or expression of the will to power, as are logic and mathematics. Behind logic lie "estimations of value, more clearly expressed, physiological demands for the preservation of a determinate form of life" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, V, 17). The scientific basis for the doctrine of the will to power is thus itself reduced to the fundamental hermeneutical principle of power, or to its equivalent, the random motions of chaos. Why should we accept this last fact or fundamental principle? This brings us back to the world-historical dimension

of Nietzsche's enterprise, or what he occasionally refers to as "to the great politics": "The time for small politics is over; the next century will already bring the struggle for world domination,—the compulsion to great politics" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, V, 140, p. 208).

In case we overlook the connection with the great reason, we can refer to the Notebooks for 1888/89: "the great politics will make physiology master over all other questions" (13:25[1], p. 638). But which rules, the great politics or the great reason? Physiology or philosophy, which latter is for Nietzsche the art of commanding and lawgiving (*Beyond Good and Evil*, V, 145)? I can only summarise the response to these questions that I have been defending today. Whereas Nietzsche was certainly convinced of the truth of modern science, he also regarded that truth as fatal to the health of western civilization. But it was too late to deny or suppress science altogether, even assuming that such a suppression would be desirable. Instead, he employed the postulates of modern science as a weapon to destroy the last vestiges of a decadent historical epoch, and, like all prophets, made use of poetry and hyperbolical rhetoric to paint a vague but edifying picture of the possible future. Indeed, he even strengthened possibility with the myth of the eternal return and the *amor fati* of determinism, in the attempt to persuade his readers that the hope of a future healthy and creative epoch is guaranteed by the presence of such epochs in the past.

Why this aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy should be used to support a doctrine of radical difference or spontaneity is entirely beyond my comprehension. But it is not my business today to discuss rival interpretations of Nietzsche, except to say that the postmodernist school of interpretations is the aesthetic complement to the scientific rhetoric of contemporary materialism. Both branches of the post-Nietzschean epoch celebrate the deconstruction of the ego, the subject, consciousness, and the unity of the individual person as well as the integrity of individual intentions and values. Rank-ordering is rejected by both as subjective prejudice; both aesthetes and scientists refuse to notice that they place themselves at the top of their respective rank-orderings, thereby confirming in the most unsubtle, not to say vulgar, manner the truth of the doctrine

of will to power. In so doing, they lend support neither to beauty nor truth, and certainly not to freedom or a liberal egalitarianism. Instead, they set a precedent by which they will themselves be overthrown in the next turn of the circle of the eternal return.

I come now to my conclusion. In the writings of Nietzsche, published and unpublished, the doctrine of freedom and creativity is rooted in the primacy of chaos, and so the innocence of Becoming is a poetical expression for the accumulation and discharge of points of force. The gateway leading to the escape from nihilism turns out to be the entrance into the most pervasive of all nihilisms. Precisely as a critic of the Enlightenment, Nietzsche shows himself to be a good son of the Enlightenment. Or more accurately, he is the offspring of the forced marriage between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, and thereby embodies the late-modern version of the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy. In that version, poetry triumphs easily because it is the human voice of scientific rationalism. Whatever its glories, scientific rationalism is unable to furnish a regulative conception of reason, and poetry unregulated by reason soon deteriorates into doggerel.

Notes

1 Citations from Nietzsche in the text are to the *Kritische Studien Ausgabe*, ed. Colli and Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980); henceforth *KSA*.

2 On this point, see the important book by Steven Horst, *Symbols, Computation, and Intentionality* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1996).

3 *KSA*, IV, p. 39: tr. Kaufmann; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1954).

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Thoughts on the Universal Homogeneous State

When I first received Paul Rahe's kind invitation to speak on this panel, I was both grateful and intrigued, yet also hesitant. I am, after all, a professor of philosophy, not a historian.[1] My first response to the question addressed to the panel was "how should I know?" It is of course true that philosophical speculation often resembles prophecy. Sometimes the prophetic element is mitigated by the rhetoric of hard-headed common sense. Here is an example from Machiavelli's *Discorsi*: "If the present be compared with the remote past, it is easily seen that in all cities and in all peoples there are the same desires and the same dispositions [*omori*: passions] as there always were. So that, if one examines with diligence the past, it is easy to foresee the future of any commonwealth..."[2] On this view, we may be said to remember the future rather than to imagine it, at least so far as history is concerned. Hence the familiar maxim that those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it.

What Machiavelli saw easily was also visible to the great political philosophers of the Seventeenth and the first half of the Eighteenth centuries, namely, the unchanging character of human nature. Unfortunately, despite this agreement in principle, the philosophers differed in the results obtained by its application. To mention only the most important example, there was a sharp difference as to whether human nature is warlike or peaceful. This disagreement can be reformulated as the question whether the origins of social and political life are harsh or soft. And this in turn leads to a further fundamental disagreement. Regardless of whether the origins were harsh or soft, the question arises as to the relevance of the initial condition to the understanding of the present and the vision of the future. Perhaps what counts is not the beginning but the end,

and perhaps also the end is not rooted in the beginning but is instead open to the productive imagination of humanity.

At the center of this cluster of questions lies an important shift in the conception of nature, a shift that is due to the rise of the new mathematical and experimental sciences. Thanks to what it is still convenient to call "the scientific revolution," the tendency, illustrated again by Machiavelli, to distinguish between political and moral virtue, came to dominate political, and of course not merely political, philosophy. Let me emphasize that the core of this distinction does not depend upon modern science; it goes back to classical antiquity and the question whether we humans are by nature political animals. This is not the place to argue the point in detail, but I would like to remind you that Aristotle himself distinguishes between the ethical virtue of the *spoudaios* or perfect gentleman, and that of the citizen of a less than perfect, in other words, any actual, political regime.

Despite the great differences between classical and early modern political philosophy, there is widespread agreement that human beings possess not merely a physiological nature but common desires and dispositions that make possible rational political calculation, if not the deduction of the noble, the good, and the just. In other words, whether one is an Aristotelian or a Machiavellian, the dominant view is that human beings are always the same, and hence that the political future can be planned on the basis of the similarity of the present to the past. Even if it should be true that custom is the king of all men, all men possess a king, namely, custom. And this, I believe, is a political maxim that is inferred from the ostensible nature of the human animal.

The radical change introduced by modern science is already visible in the champion of moderation, Montesquieu. In Book One of the *Spirit of the Laws,* Montesquieu defines natural laws, not in the spirit of Thomas, Grotius, or Pufendorf but rather in that of Descartes and Newton. Laws, he says, are "the necessary relations that derive from the nature of things."[3] This comes very close to the reinterpretation of natural laws as equations. The entire congeries of the types of law distinguished by Montesquieu can, he claims,

be arranged in a deductive structure of increasing generality, starting with the most concrete positive laws and working up to the natural laws, of which he singles out as most general the concern for self-preservation. More precisely, he names as natural laws the attachment to peace that is rooted in a sense of equal weakness, the desire for nourishment, the charm of sexual attraction, and the desire to live in society.[4]

This identification of the primary natural laws picks out what Machiavelli called the same desires and dispositions exhibited by all men everywhere. In other words, the nature of human beings defines what we are, and so it serves as a basis for determining what we can be, but not what we ought to be. David Hume refers to the same distinction as that between "is" and "ought." It is still unclear in what precise sense Montesquieu conceives of laws as relations, but this much is plain. His underlying model is that of mathematical physics, not classical or traditional doctrines of natural law. It is also true that Montesquieu's central distinction between political and moral virtue is notoriously ambiguous and is not maintained by him with perfect consistency. I take this to be a consequence of the conflict between his allegiance to Machiavelli and contemporary natural science on the one hand and his residual Aristotelianism on the other.

Montesquieu wishes to describe once and for all not merely the spirit of the laws but the laws of the spirit. Unfortunately, mathematical physics and the conception of law as a relation provides us with no basis for the verification of the laws of political behavior. To mention the most salient disanalogy, political motions exist only through the choices of self-conscious agents who thereby invoke heterogeneous rank-orderings. From a purely scientific standpoint, this process may be an illusion, but that does not alter the content of the illusion itself. Unless one is an extreme social constructionist, it would be difficult to maintain that physical phenomena are themselves illusions. To this one could add that "natural laws" of human praxis can all be violated, whereas the laws of mechanics cannot be. What one might call "irregular" physical motion is just the result of the superposition of one motion upon another, or the uncovering of

more complex laws that govern a richer physical structure. Simple motion is neither better nor worse than complex motion. But the interference or mutual interaction of laws of praxis produces an apparently endless stream of novel local phenomena, all of which invite the reflection on which are better or worse with respect to the pursuit of a choice-worthy human life. It is for example not enough to say of two quite dissimilar sets of political motion that both are expressions of the desire for self-preservation. The decisive political question is always that of the manner in which, or the circumstances under which, we desire to survive. And this remains our standard, even when we have no choice in the matter.

The Cartesian or Newtonian paradigms of nature do not provide us with the kinds of laws we require, namely, those that govern human intentions as political agents. The more we reduce political action to physical motion, the more the former disappears. It could plausibly be argued that the natural laws of praxis, that is, intentional social behavior, are themselves politically neutral, as I just illustrated in the most general case of self-preservation. In order to rectify this deficiency, Montesquieu must turn to history, exactly as did Machiavelli before him. It is necessary to show by a multiplicity of historical examples, as well as by a detailed knowledge of contemporary political life, that human beings are always the same. But this sameness must be politically significant; it cannot be a sameness of physiological functions. In other words, the evidence of history is already saturated with what we call today "value judgments." Far from being a defect, this constitutes the very nature of political history. It makes a difference to human beings whether they live under a monarchy or a despotism, as it does not make a difference to the balls rolling down an inclined surface whether one interferes with their motions or not. The balls will be deflected, but not in a way that is politically illuminating.

Stated as concisely as possible, the nature of modern science can be mathematicized because it is indifferent to human intentions, values, or historical perspectives. *Res extensa,* whether it comes to be known as atoms, sub-atomic particles, or fields, has nothing whatsoever to say to the question how we should live our lives.

The old Aristotelian notion of political nature has been entirely dropped. The shift from the classical or Aristotelian sense of nature to that of early modern physical science serves in fact to accentuate the difference rather than the similarity of human and physical phenomena. One has only to mention Galileo's distinction between primary and secondary attributes to see that the new physics is based upon, or at least itself leads directly to, the reduction of human experience to the status of an epiphenomenon of matter in motion. It is a short path from Galileo to Nietzsche, for whom life is a perturbation on the surface of chaos.

Whether we are Cartesians or Newtonians, Humean empiricists or Nietzschean postmodernists, the question of the origin of social and political life, or of what was called in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries the state of nature, ceases to be of decisive importance. For reasons which I have just noticed, the physical origin of political life has no discriminatory role to play in the assessment of political life itself. On the other hand, it might be, and in fact it surely is, a matter of great political importance as to whether we humans can acquire political control over modern science and technology. In other words, if the origins are either inaccessible or indifferent to human needs, the end of history may be contingent upon our own actions. One way to bring out the force of this possibility is to say that it prophesies the awakening of humanity from its dream-life of slavery to the supernatural as well as the natural. In this sub-species of the modern Enlightenment, scientific laws of nature are once more invoked, whether in the deductive sense of traditional rationalism or in the newer dialectical sense of Hegel and Marx.

Again I must be extremely concise. Let me cite Condorcet and d'Alembert as examples of the attempt to make historical progress rational on the basis of the mathematical paradigm of reason. This line of the Enlightenment is driven by the conviction that, contrary to the Rousseau of the *First Discourse,* scientific progress brings with it moral and political progress. One still sees this version of scientific enthusiasm in Husserl, but also in logical positivism, which the late Husserl saw as the enemy. Wherever this form of

optimism loses its persuasive force, the resulting vacuum is filled by Romanticism in its various species, and in particular, by the species that celebrates nihilism, albeit of the "noble" kind that Nietzsche calls the precondition for human creativity. This amounts to the invocation to create our own illusions, which will presumably be salutary for humanity, whereas scientific wakefulness is disastrous. The problem with this recommendation is that it has no more than does modern science a standard for the rank-ordering of our creations. I suspect that we are already witnessing the gradual triumph of the nihilists or continuous self-overcomers, that is, the children of Nietzsche, over the "hard-headed" partisans of the scientific Enlightenment. The reason for this is very simple. The underlying rhetoric of the scientific Enlightenment is itself rhetoric, not science. There is no scientific proof for the superiority of science to mythology. Everything depends upon our desires and dispositions. But even if we should employ science to determine what these are, we will learn nothing about the human significance of their satisfaction. In short: either we are computers or self-producing and so continuously self-revising texts. The end of history is thus the advent of the post-anthropological age.

If one takes a very general view of the modern epoch, as is permissible for prophets and mandatory when one has been allotted twenty minutes to reveal the truth, then the famous and often mocked notion of the end of history becomes more plausible. Once again, however, there is a choice to be made. Is the end of history one of the fulfillment of Enlightenment or the advent of the age of what Nietzsche called "the last men"? Or are these two only different names for one and the same outcome? Allow me to defend the latter thesis with a reference to Alexandre Kojève, whose thought is an essential but often distorted component of contemporary hypotheses about the end of history and the post-anthropological age. In my opinion, the question whether the age of democratic revolutions is over depends for its answer upon whether it makes sense to speak of the end of history.

In his lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*,[5] Kojève characterizes the end of history as the advent of the universal

homogeneous state, that is, the condition in which all human desire is satisfied, there is mutual recognition of persons as individuals, hence no further wish to be other than oneself. Whatever they were like at the outset of history, all human desires and dispositions are now essentially the same. This is because of the elimination of all nations, social classes, and families, as well as of religions like Christianity that posit a bifurcation in human nature between its divine and worldly elements. And this in turn is due to the comprehensive accessibility of knowledge about our desires and dispositions, which knowledge has been externalized in the form of the universal homogeneous state, of which the Napoleonic empire is the acorn, if not the full-grown oak. As it turns out, however, there are only two persons who are actually satisfied. One is Hegel, who encompasses totality through possession of the concept, that is, complete philosophical wisdom. The other is Napoleon, or the head of state who has unified the world, at first militarily, then legally in the Napoleonic code. It should be noticed that the classical split between theory and practice is preserved in this Kojèvian fantasy, since Hegel cannot rule and Napoleon cannot grasp the concept. The actual synthesis is the state or the embodiment in human praxis of the complete satisfaction of human desire, the contemplation of which constitutes theoretical wisdom.

In a famous footnote to the second edition of his lectures, Kojève adds the following modifications to his original interpretation. There is no radical difference between the Americans on the one hand and the Russians and Chinese on the other. The former are rich Russians/Chinese whereas the latter are poor Americans on the way toward becoming rich. He concludes that the "American way of life" is "the genus of life proper to the post-historical period, the actual presence of the United States in the world prefiguring the future 'eternal present'" which Kojève identifies as "animality." He modifies even this conclusion, however, by his subsequent experience of Japan, whose citizens, he says, engage in a post-historical way of life totally opposed to that of the Americans. This way of life he identifies as "snobbism," of which two examples are the tea ceremony and the art of arranging flowers. Since no animal

can be a snob, Kojève admits that there can be a survival of the human in the post-historical world, and he even holds out the hope that the Japanese will prevail over the barbarism of the American way of life rather than the reverse.[6]

This very brief reference to Kojève reveals that the conception of post-history, and so the homogeneity and universality of the state, are fractured by possibility. Those of us who today persist in the notion that we are not computers may take refuge from the universality and homogeneity of the post-anthropological world of contemporary cognitive science and the philosophy of AI in the celebration of snobbery. I mean something serious by this apparently frivolous remark. Even a philosopher of cognitive science can take pride in his or her elegance; computers, like non-human animals, cannot be snobs.

The state anticipated by Kojève is said to acquire universality because of the process, implicit in modern history, of homogeneity. Otherwise stated, the scientific Enlightenment is tacitly understood as manifesting itself in historico-political terms as the satisfaction of all fundamental human desires. Kojève as it were modifies Hobbes by Machiavelli in replacing the fear of violent death by the love of glory, but he "democratizes" the love of glory by transforming it into the desire for recognition. The universality of the state, that is, of the fully developed Napoleonic empire, guarantees that each person is universally recognized by every other person, since all are equal as citizens of one and the same state. On the other hand, thanks to the disappearance of families, social classes, and nations, "it is truly *I* who am recognized."[7]

Perhaps some of you will share my view that in his vision of the universal and homogeneous future, Kojève has unconsciously reproduced Nietzsche's prophecy of the age of the last man. Otherwise put, just as Nietzsche says that we can avoid the last man by a radical return to originative chaos, in the hope that a new and creative epoch will emerge, so Kojève wishes to exclude a return to chaos, on the ground that the completion of the Enlightenment project makes genuine creativity impossible. Progress is replaced by the exhibition of the circularity of historical truth. But this exhibition

makes epigones of us all, including Napoleon and Kojève. We are all epigones of Hegel. This is to say that individuality is universalized, and so we are all the same, exactly like the last men of Nietzsche's nightmare, whose desires have all been satisfied by the progress of science and technology, a progress that is about to fulfill Nietzsche's prophecy by transforming human beings, not into animals, but machines.

I am now able to give my answer to the assigned question. The age of democratic revolutions is certainly over if it is true that we are moving inexorably toward the universal and homogeneous state, whether in a Kojèvian or a Nietzschean modality. The dissolution of standards, the abolition of the difference between the noble and the base, the universalization of popular culture, the identification of freedom and license: these are some of the elements in the litany of complaints voiced by those who foresee, to their horror, the imminent fulfillment of Goethe's admonition to Eckermann in 1831: "Niebuhr was right; the barbarian is at the gate." On this scenario, the entropy of the last man, disguised as radical uniqueness and the reduction of identity to difference, rather than prosperity, is just around the corner.

I am myself very far from denying that such a prophecy contains enough truth to give cause for serious concern. When creativity and individuality are universalized, the result is uniform mediocrity. But this is the final democratic revolution, namely, the revolution against democracy in the honorific sense in which I assume the term is being employed today. A homogeneous democracy is a tyranny; what is praised as creative difference soon deteriorates into the enforced repudiation of difference, which itself depends upon identity, and finally upon a standpoint from which to differentiate, a standpoint that is of itself simply the contingent result of an antecedent differentiation. But I am moderately confident that we will not arrive at this postmodern utopia, and since my time is limited, I will leave it at the following partial vindication of Kojève. Snobbism, and neither science nor democracy, will protect us against the tyranny of universal vulgarity. It can hardly be science, which reduces life to lifeless and insignificant motion, nor can it be a democracy of

radically unique individuals who are thus indistinguishable from one another. Kojève was himself a snob of the highest kind, namely, a god who tolerated human beings because he required their worship. Stated more universally, but not more homogeneously, the impossibility of synthesizing Napoleon and Hegel is a crucial mark of the irreconcilability of theory and practice. This irreconcilability holds good at every level of human life, and it will, I suspect and hope, continue to produce snobs who repudiate universality and homogeneity, and thereby keep history open, with the consequent result that there are sure to be many future revolutions, at least some of which will be democratic in one sense or another of that term.

Notes

1 This paper was given at the plenary session "Has the Revolutionary Impulse Run Its Course?" moderated by Paul A. Rahe, of the Historical Society National Conference, June 2000, Boston [ed.].
2 *Discorsi* I. 39, tr. Walker (modified), vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1950), p. 302.
3 *L'esprit des lois* (vol. 2 in *Oeuvres complètes*, Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 232.
4 *Op. cit.*, pp. 235 f.
5 *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, Second Edition (Paris: Gallimard, Paris: 1976), pp. 145 f.
6 *Op. cit.*, pp. 436 f.
7 *Op. cit.*, p. 146.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Identity of, and the Difference between, Analytical and Continental Philosophy

The title of my paper is intended to invoke the spirit of Hegel.[1] As will be seen, he is, perhaps unexpectedly, the *éminence grise* behind analytical and continental philosophy. I will continue to use these names for the sake of convenience, but it should be noted that they are of questionable value. They obscure the continental origins of analytical philosophy and also imply that continental thinkers do not engage in analytical thinking. And this in turn is an obstacle to a genuine examination of the nature of philosophical analysis. As examples of questions that might profitably be considered, in the process of showing the underlying community of problems, I mention the following. What is the difference as well as the connection between conceptual analysis and phenomenological description? Is understanding more like seeing or talking? If to understand is to grasp or formulate a proposition or discursive utterance, and that understanding is not itself an intuition of meaning, then don't we require yet another proposition to explain what we have just supposedly understood? And in this case, what is the difference between analytical philosophy and the Derridean doctrine of *écriture*, in which to read is to write? But if reading is writing, is not reading impossible?

There is a further difficulty with the currently predominant custom of referring to contemporary philosophy as a dispute between analytic and continental thinkers. The term "continental" is normally taken to refer to the post-Hegelian period, and to include such thinkers as Feuerbach, Marx, Brentano, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler, Merleau Ponty, Habermas, and the congeries of movements often gathered together under the name of "postmodernism."

I am aware that continental thinkers are themselves very much concerned with their own histories, or that many of them are so interested. Nevertheless, by taking our bearings with respect to the ostensible quarrel between analysts and continentals, we strongly imply that the history of philosophy including and prior to Hegel, and in particular, ancient and medieval philosophy, is somehow irrelevant to the living issues. We assume a sharp difference between "original" or "creative" philosophy and the history of philosophy. But in making this assumption, we succumb to historicism, that is, to the view that philosophy, exactly like the experimental sciences, is in a state of continuous progress. In slightly different terms, we assume that genuine philosophizing must be carried out within the perspective of contemporary intellectual fashions.

Analytical and continental philosophies are themselves sub-dialects of *philosophia perennis*. So long as they are regarded as "original" or independent languages, we shall be unable to effect a genuine engagement or debate. The incomprehension and ideological bigotry that one still sometimes finds existing among representatives of these rival camps, as well as the patronizing attitude that many of these representatives take toward "the old thinkers," will accordingly win out over serious philosophical discussion. Even the study of the history of philosophy will be assimilated into the methods and presuppositions of the opposing camps. There will be a rewriting of history in the style predicted by George Orwell, where the "old thinkers" are transformed from respected if outmoded ancestors into prophets who anticipated our currently fashionable prejudices.

In the present context, it would be impossible to do justice to the historical continuity in the genealogies of continental and analytical philosophy. I restrict myself to the following crucial aspect of a much more complex issue. Both movements can be seen to originate in, or to receive a strong impetus in their development from, a repudiation of Hegel. Historians like Peter Hylton and P. M. S. Hacker have both documented the origin of British analytical philosophy in the rejection by Moore and Russell of absolute Idealism. The situation on the continent is somewhat more complicated.

It is nevertheless true, I believe, that Neo-Kantianism, positivism, materialism, and of course the philosophers of history (like Dilthey) as well as the unclassifiable Nietzsche, all owed their origin in one degree or another to the collapse of Hegelianism shortly after the master's death. The origins of phenomenology in turn derive from Neo-Kantianism, as is obvious in the case of Husserl, who is perhaps the last great representative of Enlightenment rationalism. In my opinion, the two philosophies of Heidegger, strangely evocative of the two philosophies of Wittgenstein, are unthinkable if one does not take into account the positive and negative influence of Hegel on the solitary wanderer of the Schwarzwald. In any event, Heidegger's fundamental ontology, culminating in *Being and Time*, for all its assimilation of elements from Aristotle, Augustine, Dilthey, and Nietzsche, is essentially an attempt to construct a systematic philosophy of history, and in that sense shows the same spirit of *Wissenschaft* as is epitomized in Hegel's system. Heidegger's later teaching can be construed in a preliminary way as a prophetic denunciation of western rationalism, and in particular of the scientific spirit of the modern Enlightenment.

Included among those who were decisively influenced by the early Heidegger is the French left-Hegelian, Alexandre Kojève, who carried out in a Hegelian idiom the Heideggerian beginning of a systematic ontology of historicity. Among Kojève's students, direct and indirect, were many of the most influential founders of what has come to be called postmodernism. Kojève's disciples, however, for the most part abandoned his aspiration to systematicity and fastened upon elements of his teaching that are, or could be used to be, critical of western rationalism and the Enlightenment. I am thinking of such Kojèvian themes as the dialectic of master and slave and the post-anthropological end of history. As my time is limited, I shall say simply that the aforementioned students replaced Kojève's emphasis upon identity or sameness with the celebration of difference. Kojève was the last major continental thinker to keep alive the Hegelian doctrine of the identity of identity and difference.

To come back now to the analysts, with every due reservation, I suggest that there is an analogy for our purposes between Kojève's

attempt to construct a conceptual system in the name of Hegel's logic, and Russell's attempt to develop a scientific philosophy with its foundation in mathematical logic. I believe that it is not unreasonable to see Russell's enterprise as a response to the same impetus as motivated his initial Idealism. If we now shift our attention from the Russellian beginnings of analytical philosophy to the influence of the later Wittgenstein, in addition to other leading figures in British analytical thought, perhaps the main trait that these thinkers share is the rejection of the scientific paradigm of philosophy. I quote the following remark by Wittgenstein: "Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in showing that things which look the same are really different."[2]

The collapse of quasi- or anti-Hegelian systematicity has led to the celebration of difference in both the analytical and continental schools. The "difference" between the two modes of celebration is that analytical thinkers tend to take their bearings by common sense, ordinary language, or conventional use on the one hand, and empirical science as well as logic on the other, whereas the continentals, in their most notorious manifestation as postmodernists, repudiate ordinary language on behalf of spontaneity. Parenthetically, I am not aware that continental philosophy has been able on the whole to preserve the chastity of ordinary language. For example, the only substantial attempt to duplicate Anglo-Saxon analysis in German known to me is that of Ernst Tugendhat, who comes as much from Husserl and in particular from Heidegger as he does from the analytical school. Perhaps there is no such thing as "ordinary German" or for that matter, "ordinary French."

To come back to the citation from Wittgenstein, it would seem odd to attempt a rapprochement between the logical positivism of Carnap and continental postmodernism. But it is not so odd to discern a subterranean connection between the hermeneutical principles of Quine and those of the late Nietzsche. I say connection, not identity. But Quine's views on the inscrutability of reference and the indeterminacy of translation could easily be used in support of the continental doctrines of the internal multiplicity of

authors and texts. The same is true of his thesis that one cannot separate the linguistic from the factual component of a sentence. Quine also holds that truth, including logical truth, is dependent upon the success of science as a whole. But this leaves indeterminate the status of the language of science as a whole, since there is presumably no world of facts independent of such a language that serves as the basis of its intelligibility. My general point is that whereas Quine is much closer to Carnap, and so to the early Wittgenstein, and in this sense to the systematic science of Hegel, than he is to the philosophers of difference, he shares the underlying Kantian thesis of the identity between thinking and speaking. That is to say, he is essentially a philosopher of language, for whom to be is to be spoken (= to be the bound variable in a proposition of the first-order predicate calculus). There is no transcendental ego to ground the language of science, but only linguistic empiricism. Unfortunately, experience then becomes an artifact of the predominant language. The dominant interpretation of experience depends upon which language is spoken, and this in turn is presumably contingent, despite the eloquent testimony of science.

This observation about Quine is intended to illustrate the contention that the influence of the logical positivists and the early Wittgenstein is in one sense very close to the Enlightenment paradigm of universal science, still to be found in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, but in another, a result of the triumph of the historical spirit of nineteenth century thought over the absolute ego of post-Kantian Idealism and Hegel's speculative dialectic. It therefore comes as no surprise that there has been something of a Hegel renaissance among analytical philosophers, although the leaders of this renaissance would no doubt give quite a different account of their motives than I do. On the whole, the analytical Hegelians convert him back into a Kantian epistemologist, thereby jettisoning the absolute, but in fact, the transcendental ego as well. The historicist component of Hegel thus triumphs over the systematic superstructure.

I cannot discuss at length this sub-current in contemporary analytical philosophy; it remains to be seen how strong it will become

and how long it will last. Much more important for us is the echo of Hegel that is discernible in books like the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *The Logical Construction of the World*. In the former, for example, Wittgenstein (no doubt unconsciously) replaces Hegel's account of the totality of logical categories (moments of the single unified concept) that underlies, and is the onto-logical precondition for rational explanation altogether, with the general logical form of the proposition. In other words: we find in both the analytic and the continental movements two distinct tendencies, one scientific and systematic, the other anti- or non-scientific and oriented toward difference and particularity. It is my impression that this dichotomy is deeper than the general interest in language, discourse, hermeneutics, and texts that is so widespread in contemporary philosophy of all types.

At the same time, I believe that the dichotomy is more apparent than real, since the parties on both sides are philosophers of language and historicists rather than Enlightenment representatives of an objective and universal science. Or rather, they apply the historicist wing of the Enlightenment, already visible in Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Hume, to the scientific ideal of the Enlightenment. It is very striking that by and large, contemporary philosophers do not pose "the big questions" whereas some natural scientists, in particular cosmologists, are very much engaged in speculations that could only be called "metaphysical." Just as the scientific and technological community seems to remain largely immune to the now fashionable disillusionment with the Enlightenment, so too we may be dependent upon theoretical physicists and cosmologists for the preservation of a genuinely speculative, and indeed, synthetic or universal philosophical tradition. This is especially interesting, in view of the fact that the loss of interest by philosophers in "big questions" is due in large part to the influence of modern science. In my opinion, professional philosophy of science has failed to do justice to the philosophical richness and daring on the part of the great founding fathers of late-modern mathematics and physical science. I also miss among the contemporary figures in foundations of mathematics the kind of philosophical depth and concern that one finds in Cantor, Brouwer, Russell, and Gödel.

In short, there are today two different attitudes toward the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment, and more generally, toward the assessment of the present epoch as one of health or decadence. As one moves farther away from the "hard" sciences, an attitude of decadence seems to prevail, even though it is often camouflaged by the rhetoric of postmodern revolution. One formulation of what is at stake in this quarrel is the opposition between discovery and invention. The assertion that we know only what we make is reiterated throughout the modern period of European philosophy, and I have the impression that it is as central to contemporary debates in the analytical movement as it is decisive for continental thought. Another way in which to express the dominance of invention in our century is by observing that even those analytically oriented philosophers of science who defend "realism" today have a tendency to formulate it in Kantian or quasi-Kantian terms. That at least is my impression.

But it is more than my impression that the very conception of theory has been gradually transformed during the last three centuries from the notion of contemplation or discovery to that of interpretation or invention. One has only to think here of the central role of models in contemporary philosophy, and especially in philosophy of science, and the difference between a model or interpretation of a model on the one hand, and the role of Platonist paradigms in classical rationalism on the other. As to the continentals, the contemporary repudiation of a natural order and the celebration of difference guarantees the triumph of invention over discovery. If thinking is writing and theory is production, discovery is impossible. To "see" is already to erase or cover over antecedent productions with a new interpretation.

Even those of us who are adamant in our dedication to the truth have been influenced, often decisively, by our admiration for originality. Science is regularly portrayed as "creative" and we admire new theories in cosmology or neurophysiology, or radical innovations in formal logic, as though they were poems or paintings produced by the latest artistic genius. For our present purposes, the point to be emphasized in this complex situation is the importance

of spontaneity. The main force that underlies modern philosophy and still motivates contemporary debates is the conflict—I am tempted to say, the dialectic—between freedom and reason. Kant attempted to resolve this opposition by making reason free in the sense of spontaneous, but by defining the spontaneous products of reason as synthetic *a priori* or in other words as the necessary structure of rationality.

In the Kantian teaching, we are free because not bound by an independent natural order on the one hand or a supernatural and thus trans-rational authority of revelation on the other. To be as brief as possible, Kant made necessity spontaneous. In so doing, however, he subordinated it to possibility. Historically, at least, one conception of necessity was substituted for another, until finally the transcendental ego was itself replaced by the historical spirit. In other words, spontaneity was in principle liberated from the bounds of scientific or mathematical or even conceptual necessity and shifted to the necessity of history. Here again, Hegel is the crucial figure.

To bring this line of reflection to a close, my second point is that one should not simply look for the connections between continental and analytical philosophy in Kant, and skip from Kant directly to Neo-Kantianism, positivism, and the new directions of Frege and Husserl. I will not go so far as to say that Hegel is the crucial personage here, but he is an essential link in the history. This brings me to my third and last point. One of the late consequences of the dissolution of Hegelian logic by historicity is Nietzsche. It is still possible to detect Hegel's circular concept of totality in Nietzsche's figure of the eternal return of the same. One sees in Nietzsche the death-struggle of freedom and reason, or necessity and spontaneity. Whatever may be the correct interpretation of Nietzsche's comprehensive intentions, there can be very little doubt that freedom and spontaneity are his legacy to the contemporary philosophical situation. Nietzsche is the master-figure underlying all contemporary allegiance to, and indeed, obsession with, the twin idols of creation and difference. It is therefore quite important for us to focus upon the ever-increasing interest in Nietzsche among analytical philosophers, or upon the

similarity of views between Nietzsche and important analytical philosophers who presumably have no interest in him, but who share his conception of interpretation, or the hermeneutical nature of reason. On this crucial point, as I suggested previously, there is a subterranean connection between Nietzsche and Heidegger on the one hand, and Wittgenstein, Quine, and Goodman on the other.

Analysts and continentals alike are attracted to notions of invention rather than discovery, interpretation rather than contemplation or intuition, the celebration of difference rather than identity or sameness, and freedom rather than submission to the reification and suppression of necessity. This is the consequence of the instability of Kant's attempt to unify the necessity of reason with the spontaneity or freedom of humanity. I find it very suggestive that the latest incarnation of the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment, cognitive science and the philosophy of AI, is repeating in scientific or quasi-scientific terms the dissolution of the ego and self-consciousness by Nietzsche's hermeneutical psychologism. It could easily be shown that Nietzsche anticipates contemporary materialist philosophy of mind on many if not all decisive points, and that he represents the underlying connection between continental postmodernism and analytical philosophy of mind. How odd that the combination of spontaneity and systematicity, devised to preserve human freedom, has culminated in *l'homme machine*.

Twentieth century philosophy is fundamentally characterized by the failure of two great attempts to preserve the systematicity and comprehensiveness of *philosophia perennis*: I refer to Heidegger's revision of phenomenology as fundamental ontology and to the analytical formalism of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. In these remarks, I have tried to suggest how both attempts are not only the distant result of the collapse of Hegelianism, but also the way in which they reiterate the Hegelian motivation. The failure of these attempts has left us with the multiplicity of schools and the proliferation of academic fashions. We live in an age of epigones who have persuaded themselves that the death of the master-builders is equivalent to their own originality. The message that I infer from the history of the last two centuries is that philosophy is necessarily the asking and answering

of "the big questions." The answers may be defective in every case, but this does not invalidate the necessity of the questions, as Kant, no friend to traditional metaphysics, explicitly recognized. So long as we scorn these big questions, our insistence that we live in a post-philosophical age will validate itself. Let us hope that conferences like this one, in which representatives of diverse standpoints try to talk out their differences, will result in an identity of identity and difference, that is to say, not in wisdom but in philosophy.

Notes

1 This paper was originally given as part of the Round Table on Relations Between Analytic and Continental Philosophy held at the XX World Congress of Philosophy, Boston, August 1998. [ed.].

2 See Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 300 (note 5).

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Hegel and Historicism

I. Theory, Politics, and History

The Greek word *historia* means "inquiry," with special emphasis upon direct inspection, either by watching the events as they transpire, or by talking to someone who participated in them. In the first case, the inquiry may be either theoretical or practical. We may look at heavenly or natural beings or at the acts of men. In the latter case, our inquiry is practical because of its object; however, it does not, in the modern sense of the term, produce anything. Those acts which are most worthy of our observation are, broadly speaking, political: that is, events which concern the order and well-being of the city as a whole. Some of these acts are productive, and some are not. They include not merely debates over public policy, wars, and the like, but also dramatic performances, rhetorical displays, and, in certain cases, technical production (perhaps the most obvious of which is the discovery of new weapons). Looking at political acts is also, or goes together with, listening. Whether or not we ourselves speak or write is a secondary matter. If we do so, then our inquiry itself may, and probably does, become a political act.

A *historia,* then, is first the private act of looking or inquiring, and second, the possibly public consequences of that act of looking or inquiring. Can one say that for the Greeks there is something corresponding to "historical existence" in the various modern and contemporary senses of that expression? Clearly not, unless we take the phrase to be equivalent to "political life." It would be inappropriate to say that theoretical looking is a mode of historical existing, since the Greek thinkers believed that "looking" in the sense of "seeing the nature" is independent of political laws, customs, or collisions between cities or groups within the city. Even those who regarded the things at which they looked to be in motion, would not have said that the vision of natural change is itself conditioned by

political events. To see that everything changes is to see something that does not change. This formulation covers even the doctrines of the Sophists as presented in an extreme form by Plato in dialogues like the *Theaetetus*. Protagoras is there made to argue that perception is finally a matter of desire for the beneficial, in the sense of the healthy (166 ff.). But Protagoras never suggests that his teaching about perception is true only under certain political circumstances. He does, of course, say that what a city regards as healthy will depend upon its constitution, i.e., upon the state of its "senses." If this looks to the contemporary reader like the modern doctrine of historical relativism, let him recall that for Protagoras, the theoretical statement about the conditions of cities is itself extra-political. One could therefore say that, in the Greek context, something like historicism might possibly be detected, provided that we ignore theory, or in other words, provided that we equate our "historical" inquiries with the specifically political deliberations and political implications of technical productions.

This observation, it seems to me, is helpful when we try to find our bearings with respect to the doctrine of historicism. To put the point once more in the simplest possible way, historicism arises when theory ceases to mean extra-political looking. This point is not quite as simple as it sounds. It gives us the very interesting result that historicism is closely connected to politics. One could even say that historicism arises when politics itself undergoes a deterioration analogous to that by which theory is politicized. For example, it may be that if theory is politicized, then the justification for the city (or state) depends entirely upon patriotism, that is, upon the health of the city in a sense not at all distinct from what Protagoras asserts in the *Theaetetus*. The health of the city is, as it were, the bloom on the face of its power, the vigor of its belief in itself. The city can justify itself only by looking at itself. Perhaps under extreme circumstances, this form of narcissism may be indefinitely continued. However, it inevitably comes to a close when there is contact with other cities. If knowledge is political, and there are many political beings, then knowledge of the righteousness of one's own city rests upon strength of belief: upon resolution, courage, or commitment.

These now fashionable terms, used primarily if not exclusively with respect to the apolitical individual, were once included in the notion of patriotism. But it becomes progressively more difficult to sustain one's patriotism, or the resoluteness of one's narcissism, as one's political experience accumulates. For reasons which need not detain us here, this accumulation of experience comes to be known as *history*. From here it is a short step to the notion that human existence is not primarily political, but is rather *historical*. Since theory was, by hypothesis, previously politicized, it now becomes historicized. However, by the cunning of reason, to employ a good Hegelian phrase, this result simply reproduces the situation from which we began. For we now have to decide whether it is possible to look at history in an extra-historical way. Is theory about history possible? In other words, is "philosophy of history" possible? This is the question which should occur to anyone who approaches Hegel for the first time, and certainly to the inquirer about Hegel and historicism.

II. Two Concepts of Historicism

So much by way of introduction. Now let us come a bit closer to grips with the topic. We need to have a specific understanding of the term "historicism" in order to see whether it is applicable to Hegel. I shall distinguish two fundamental senses of the term. According to the first, whether or not nature is independent of history (and this cannot be determined), man's apprehension of nature is conditioned by history. In this case, answers to questions like "what is true?," "what is good?," and perhaps "what is beautiful?" are relative to differing historical circumstances. We note that, for the most part, these circumstances are political, at least in the older sense of the term. On this view, the addressees of our questions, including ourselves, reveal themselves in accord with the different perspectives opened by shifting political relations. The language of revelation may be taken to imply that natural, or supernatural, beings lie beyond their historical manifestation. This is what gives coherence to history, and so makes possible our posing of questions about truth, goodness, and beauty, however temporal may be the answers available to us.

In the second sense of the term "historicism," the distinction between nature and history, even as a possibility, disappears. One could express this in two ways, either by saving that nature *is* history, or that the sense of nature (and so, of "is") is historical. This is taken to mean that there are no beings, natural or supernatural, concealed behind their temporal manifestations. In the first case, it is possible to say that the questions we pose about truth, goodness, and beauty are somehow the same, even though their answers at different epochs are not. That is, we can make sense out of history, including the boundary between nature and history. In the second case, no such sense is accessible. The ground of sense is inaccessible; still more radically, there is no ground of sense. History is then a senseless flow of appearances; more accurately, the assessments we make of those appearances are appearances of appearances. We must then deny any stable significance to the term "history" itself. And the result is silence, or what comes to the same thing, infinite chatter.

It can be said at once that Hegel is not a historicist in the second sense of the term. But it is not quite so easy to decide whether he is a historicist in the first sense. What is beyond dispute is that he makes certain contributions to the development of historicism. To mention only two crucial points: he identifies the structure of eternity with that of human history, and he prepares for the lowered status of politics by his distinction between the state and society. In this paper, I shall be concerned primarily with the first point. Let me therefore say a word about the second, before turning to my main theme. The distinction between state and society has as one of its motives the preservation of individual freedom, and thereby the strengthening of the state. It is related to the fact that for Hegel, art, religion, and philosophy (which includes science) are the perfection of the subjective spirit, and not of the objective or (as we may put it) politicized individual. Hegel is not a vulgar Marxist, for whom all spiritual production can be explained in terms of concrete political or economic events. Spiritual productions are produced by the spirit, which follows a historical development but not one that is subordinate to the state. On the contrary, the state is determined

by spiritual development. But the separation of the individual as a social being from the state, however interrelated the two may be in Hegel, combines with his aforementioned identification of eternity and history to prepare the way for a private and historical conception of spiritual satisfaction. In other words, the state as the practical actuality of the Absolute, itself manifested in the theoretical comprehension of the wise man, is replaced by the state as the consequence of the resolution or will to power of the radically creative historical individual. This result occurs as soon as the notion of the Absolute is historicized.

However important this point may be to the understanding of Hegel's doctrine of history, it is secondary to the identification of eternity and human history. Let us therefore concentrate upon this difficult thesis. And we begin with a simple observation. To assert that God and nature *are* history (whatever this may mean in detail) is to make an absolute statement about the Whole or totality (*das Ganze*). This statement cannot itself be a transient historical creature. Of course, the statement may be enunciated in a given historical epoch, under definite political circumstances which, according to the doctrine, may be necessary conditions for its revelation. But this does not in itself deprive the doctrine of its absolute status. It serves instead to distinguish the given historical epoch as the absolute moment of history in which the Absolute speaks the total truth about itself. For this decisive reason, Hegel is not a genuine historicist, in either sense of the term just distinguished. Yet he may be called a historicist in a transcendental sense: Hegel's assertion of historicism is at once a transcendence of history. The root of the doctrine of history is eternity or the Absolute. History is thus for Hegel the manifestation of the complete growth of the root, a manifestation that occurs in and for human beings. Let us look at some of crucial details of this contention.

According to Hegelian teaching there are, so to speak, two distinguishable "shows" or "manifestations," and the comprehensive truth or the Absolute is their articulated unity, which Hegel calls their identity-within difference. The first "show" is described cryptically yet effectively in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Hegel says there

"Logic is thus to be grasped as the system of pure reason, as the domain of pure thinking. *This domain is the truth, as it is without covering, in and for itself.* One may thus express oneself as follows, that this content is the performance [*Darstellung*] of God: how he is in his eternal essence, before the creation of nature and a finite spirit."[1] The *Logic,* then, is not simply a "theory" constructed or created by a historical being, or the expression of a historical perspective. It is God manifesting himself as the Absolute, in and for the thought of Hegel, and by extension, to those who can think Hegel's thoughts. This manifestation or performance is no more historical than is the thinking of a mathematical truth for a Platonist. It is, of course, an activity or process, as I have tried to bring out by translating *Darstellung* as "performance." But the process is that of eternity, unfolding to itself, and thus grasping itself as Idea within the circular or eternally recurring pulsation of the speculative concept. In plain English, Hegel's thought in the *Logic* is the thought of God, and in both the subjective and objective senses of the term.

The writing of the book *Science of Logic* in the Nineteenth Century by an individual German Lutheran living in (finally) Prussia is, of course, a historical event in the usual sense of the term. It is made possible, or rather necessary, by the second "show," namely, world history. In theological language, God, having created the world, reveals himself to a man by a series of stages corresponding to the development of the human or finite spirit. The crucial component, but not the last or ripest one, is the actual entrance of God into human history, in the person of his son, Jesus Christ. In religious terms, then, history is the process by which man develops from belief in, to knowledge of, God. When this development is completed, the "childish form" (as Hegel calls it) of our understanding of God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is replaced by the ripe speculative knowledge of logical reason.[2] God is then grasped as the absolute process or trans-historical performance recorded in the *Logic.* The history of man's religious development corresponds to, or is the temporal manifestation of, the absolute development of the Logos or God as living self-conscious and self-knowing concept. This history is essentially completed when man

acquires conceptual knowledge of God. As Hegel puts it, there is no longer a "Beyond" or an alienation between God and man. Existentially, God is actual within the community of his believers.[3] The individual subject or member of the religious community is filled with divine spirit by belief.[4] But this is not yet the highest and deepest stage of religion, namely, wisdom, or the identification with eternity by a thinking (discursively or conceptually) of the universal.[5] When Hegel says, at the end of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (1821), that "religion must take refuge in philosophy," and that philosophers make up an isolated priesthood whose task is to stand apart from the world (and hence, I add, from the religious community) in order to take care of the truth,[6] he is saying that the significance of belief depends upon conceptual knowledge. And this is what he means by the occasional remark that the content of religion and philosophy are the same. The content is the coincidence of eternity and temporality, but it is thought only by philosophy.

Religious or divine history (the Christian chapter of religious history altogether: the repentance and conversion of natural spirit) culminates in a union between man and God in wisdom.[7] Religious history, however, is the significance of world history, expressed in a form accessible to *Verstand,* or representational and reflective (as opposed to speculative or finally comprehensive) thinking. As Hegel makes clear in the *Phenomenology of Spirit,* religious, and so world-history, correspond to the *incomplete* human spirit, that is, to its temporal development toward a reflexive logical grasp of itself as totality.[8] Since logic is the truth of history, or conversely, since history is the manifestation of the Absolute in human time (that is, the humanly accessible meaning of the logical identity-within-difference of eternity and temporality), if history were not essentially complete, the truth of logic would be inaccessible. There would remain a "Beyond" or alienation between God and man. In short, Hegel's system would dissolve. In religious language, God would not yet have arrived at the last stage of world history. However, both these possibilities are explicitly denied by Hegel in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History.* The period of European history from the Protestant Reformation onward is the raising of "the last flag of time":

it corresponds to the *parousia* of the Holy Ghost, or the reunion of the divine Father and Son.[9] And the "last stage" of the last stage is "our world," "our time," that is, the period from the French Revolution to Hegel's own explanation of the significance, not just of world history, but of the Absolute whose transcendental process it mirrors in human time. The end of human history is the achievement by spirit of the knowledge of its true nature.[10] That is, "world history is the performance [*Darstellung*] of the divine, absolute process of Spirit in its highest forms, of the steps through which it obtains its truth, self-consciousness about itself."[11] These steps (the *Volksgeister*) are "the necessary moments of the one universal Spirit which, through them within history, raises and concludes itself in a self-grasping totality."[12] Spirit actualizes its end or fulfillment in history: it produces knowledge of itself in the self-consciousness of Hegel. This is what Hegel means when he says that the result of world history "is known to me, because I already know the All (*das Ganze*)."[13]

Let me recapitulate very briefly. The first show is the performance of God as eternal, circular, absolute process. The second show is the process of human history, which reveals the eternal and absolute process in a series of stages that are temporal analogues to the stages of the eternal process. The eternal process, as circular, is the identity-within-difference of the finite and the infinite, i.e., of "finite" in the sense of being fully accessible to conceptual intelligence. It is complete. Therefore, the temporal process of human history, whether political, aesthetic, religious, or philosophical, is also essentially complete. And "essentially" means that the significance of human life is fully understood conceptually by Hegel, and by those who understand his teaching. Hegel's teaching is thus *the show of shows*: the reconciliation between God and man or between eternity and temporality. In the language of the *Phenomenology*, spirit completes the circuit of its "fall into time" by grasping its pure concept. To do this, or to think the *Logic*, is to "cancel time."[14] This is, of course, not intended to mean that time is literally annihilated, but that spirit, as thinking the *Logic*, dwells in the bosom of the Lord, or "exists" as the actualization of eternity. This is a spiritualized version of the teaching of Spinoza.

III. The Dilemma of the End of History

We must now face a difficult and much-disputed issue. According to the Christian doctrine, the overcoming of human differences, or of alienation from oneself, one's fellows, and God, brings history literally to an end. The "day of judgment" arrives, the *Augenblick* or instant of eternity, and human temporality is no more. Hegel never mentions favorably or teaches anything of this sort. Reconciliation with God and personal immortality occur exclusively in *this* world, within the eternal present. As Peter Cornehl puts it in his valuable study, salvation is not for Hegel *Entweltlichung* but *Einweltlichung*.[15] To quote Hegel himself, the meaning of the Christian doctrine of immortality is that "the soul, the individual subjectivity, has an infinite, eternal determination, to be citizen in the domain of God. The infinite demand to view God, i.e., to become conscious in the spirit of his truth as present, is not in this temporal present for the consciousness as sensuously intuiting, as representing."[16] To *Vernunft*, or logically articulate reason, eternity is *within* the temporal present, *which is therefore eternal*. A detailed demonstration of this conclusion would require a technical analysis of the *Logic*. I have tried to provide some of this elsewhere, and will make the point now in a more accessible if necessarily summary way.

According to Hegel, time is the externalization of pure internality,[17] that is, it is the principle of pure self-consciousness, or the unfolding of the spatio-temporal continuum of Becoming (the externalization of Spirit), in which all determinations arise, thanks to the co-ordinate self-development of self-consciousness or subjectivity.[18] The overcoming of the separation between subject and object in absolute wisdom is thus the total development of the implications of the abstract structure of temporality itself. The moment or instant is an *Aufhebung* of past and future: it contains the previous as well as the next moment. Hegel's systematic wisdom amounts to a complete explanation of this comprehensive structure of the instant as present. Temporal presence is thus the presence of eternity within time, and therefore of the eternity *of* time. The analysis of the temporal moment thus provides us with the simplest example of what Hegel means by "double negation," the heart of his logical doctrine.

However, a problem arises. If time is eternal, and history is the sense of time, the eternal succession of temporal moments does not seem to contradict the finite or complete presentation of history as sense of that eternal sequence. On the other hand, since time never ceases, neither can history, if only as the perpetual show of the fulfilled sense of the identity of eternity and temporality. In short, once the truth is revealed, nothing fundamental can change.

Let us look more closely at this peculiar situation. Suppose we distinguish between essential and ordinary or contingent history. Once Hegel reveals the truth, wisdom is complete (although not, of course, the process by which contingent individuals acquire the Hegelian wisdom). Therefore nothing essentially new can occur. And this, again, means that all categories of logic are manifest. The total manifestation of categories quite literally demands the eternity of time, as I have just pointed out. But there is no reason to suppose that ordinary or empirical history will not continue in new and unpredictable ways. America, Russia, or Brazil (Hegel's examples) may well be the next earthly dwelling of the world-spirit. Perhaps the Hegelian teaching will be lost entirely by future man, and then once more acquired. As Hegel himself says in his lectures on the philosophy of history, immediately after identifying America as the land of the future revelation of world history: "Philosophy has nothing to do with prophecy. We have rather to do with that side of history which has been and with that which is—in philosophy however with that which has neither merely been, nor will only be, but with that which *is* and is eternal—with reason, and with that we have enough to do."[19]

In other words, ours is that "last" age, not of empirical history, but of the essential cycle of time within which the concept is revealed to man. This cycle we call "our" history, i.e., up to the point of Hegel. But we should do better to call it the "logical blueprint" for understanding history altogether in its unending process. Note carefully that this is not to deny the uniqueness of our cycle *as* a blueprint. However, since the circle of time (and so of history) is an element within the comprehensive circle of eternity, or a showing of eternity to itself *as* temporality (which is needed for the completeness of

eternity as the All), and since this showing is eternal, it must be the case that the show is either co-extensive with eternity, or else that it is eternally repeated. Now the problem of the end of history is profoundly visible. The temporal show cannot be co-extensive with eternity because, if it were, then the Absolute would never be fully or essentially revealed. Hegel's teaching is then dissolved into a doctrine of "infinite progress" (a notion he despised). The unending revelation of the Absolute—one day in America, the next in Russia, and so on forever—is not really an absolute revelation, but an infinite sequence of finite and hence infinitely unsatisfactory revelations. This is vulgar or superficial historicism. If, however, the temporal show is not coextensive with eternity, then there is a permanent alienation between logic and history, between God and man, or universal and particular, and Hegelian *Wissenschaft* is again impossible. We may try to avoid this dilemma by claiming that eternity and temporality are the same, and thus that the eternal repetition of the show is in fact "the eternal return of the same." To do this, however, is to take the step from Hegel to Nietzsche, a step, needless to say, that Hegel did not himself sanction.

In my opinion, if we remain within the Hegelian teaching, and preserve the isomorphism between eternity and temporality, then there is no solution to the dilemma of the end of history. For Hegel, essential history *must* end, in the sense of providing a complete and final revelation of the truth, and so of the significance, of history. But history can end, in this sense, only because eternity manifests itself fully within, and is categorically or structurally the same as, time. This is mandatory for Hegel because philosophy proceeds by a developing comprehension, exclusively through man's unassisted reason, of the concrete historical world. The categories of logic are discovered by the dialectical process of attempting to understand human experience *without* speculative logic. There are no divine revelations, no mystical intuitions, no "leaps" beyond the *hic et nunc* to a transcending realm of experience or cognition. One must think through human experience, step by step (as schematized in the *Phenomenology*), in order to arrive at the threshold of logic. Since logic is the rethinking or "recollecting" of what has been experienced in

and as history, or (in the terms of the *Encyclopedia*) of what has been experienced in raising self-consciousness to the certitude of itself as truth, namely, as the identity of subject and object—that is, to the level of *Vernunft*[20]—there can be no content in logic that is not already present in phenomenology or *Verstand*. The categories of logic *are* the structures of time, and so of human temporality. The logical process of rethinking history takes place "beyond" history (in speculative reason), yet at the same time "within" history (in the person of Hegel). Hegel's thinking is thus the individual that unites the universal and the particular, or the eternal and the temporal. It is the conceptual articulation of the image of Christ. This is what Hegel means by the famous remark that the owl of Minerva takes flight only at dusk.[21] Every individual is a son of his time, but Hegel is *the* son of *the* time. He is the fulfillment of the promise of Christ. The remark about being a son of one's own time is immediately contrasted with the process, rejected by Hegel, of building in thought a world as it ought to be, an imaginary "beyond" that has no actuality in the temporal present.[22] The meaning of these remarks from the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, too often quoted as though they explain the corpus of Hegel's work, on the contrary becomes visible only when we grasp the meaning of that work. Only then will we know what it means for Hegel to be a son of his time.

Granted the finality (in the sense explained) of Hegel's age, and of his doctrine as the explanation of the significance of that age, the problem of explaining the post-Hegelian historical future is still unresolved. A future in which nothing logically new is revealed is just a contingent footnote to eternity. How then can it be part of the circle of temporality which exhibits the structure of eternity? On the same basis, it becomes impossible to understand how the Hegelian teaching could ever be forgotten, since to do so would be to suffer a "post-Hegelian" phenomenon, whereas the circle of temporality, defined as history, and so as the development of the (eternal) concept, purports to explain only the process by which man develops into, and culminates with, the Hegelian wisdom. The Hegelian must then claim that history is *essentially* complete, but also that it is contingently complete. And yet, he cannot make this claim, at least

not one moment after the deterioration of Hegel's age, a process that began, as we may say, with his death. The only comprehensible interpretation of Hegel's teaching, I suggest, is that history repeats itself exactly and forever: a rigorous version of Nietzsche's teaching of the eternal return, a perpetual process by which the eternal shows its absolute development in the mirror of time, and so, a perpetual repetition of the same show. Unfortunately, post-Hegelian experience, to say nothing of Hegel's own occasional remarks about the future, show that this interpretation is impossible.

IV. The Alienation of Time from Eternity in Modern Philosophy

Hegel's dilemma, just studied, apparently arises from the structural identification of eternity and temporality. I suggested that the reason for this identification is the need to make scientific knowledge—basically "logic" in Hegel's sense—accessible to man's unassisted reason. Are there deeper motives for this identification? I believe that we must at least raise this question in order to point toward a more adequate understanding of the meaning of historicism than can emerge from a sketch of Hegel's philosophy of history. The immediate justification for our renewal of the question is simple enough. Empiricists also restrict human knowledge to what can be inferred from temporal experience. Yet even if they give a kind of eternal status to mathematics and logic, which is of course not always the case, they certainly do not conclude their analyses with a claim to absolute wisdom.

In the famous phrase, there is a distinction between the forms of logico-mathematical thinking, and the content of experience. The forms of rational thought may be defined as self-evident, or they may be reduced to the status of human stipulations or creations. But what is self-evident to one man is questionable to another. Apart from technical problems of definition intrinsic to mathematical thinking, the question arises inevitably concerning the origin of pure forms and their applicability to empirical phenomena. If the forms are the self-evident structure of eternity, then the empirical phenomena are not "appearances" in the sense of the temporal presentation of eternal essences, but *illusions* of a stable world which is

in fact flux or chaos. In this case, however, the visibility of the pure mathematical forms has no essential applicability to empirical illusion, except to destroy it or to expose it as an illusion. Mathematical thinking thus attains to the truth, or to eternity, by the destruction of self-consciousness, or of the thinking of phenomena as phenomena. This is the dualism of seventeenth-century mathematical rationalism, a kind of restricted Platonism in which "wisdom" is death to this world, or an assimilation of the knower to geometrical intuition and algebraic equations.

Mathematical rationalism thus leads directly to historicism. Since mathematics supplies us with formal intuitions, or with equations of exclusively numerical "values," it says nothing of its own significance. The decision to employ mathematics, or to transcend temporality in eternity, is non-mathematical. No doubt such a decision, once it is made, could be expressed in mathematical form and its implications deduced. But this has nothing to do with the sense or appropriateness of the decision itself. In the terminology of seventeenth-century rationalism, the decision springs from the passions, whether as the desire to modify the immediate environment or, more comprehensively, as the desire to become master and possessor of nature. To put the problem in its simplest and most radical form: mathematics alienates the mathematician from *himself.* If philosophy is identical with mathematics or meta-mathematics, then the source of meta-mathematics falls under the supervision of the non-mathematician, such as the minister, sociologist, or psychiatrist. This amounts to the admission that mathematics, and so philosophy, has no intrinsic justification. The next step is to smuggle into philosophy the justification of ideology; in this case, the ideology of the scientific enlightenment. Thus the distinction between form and content, apparently required to preserve the integrity or absolute status of form, reduces content to illusion. And even, let me note in passing, if one could recapture the essentiality of appearances by submitting them to a logical analysis, the entire activity would still possess no significance or justification in human terms, since the intention of the analyst would depend for its essentiality or integrity upon being transformed into a logical form.

This leads merely to the need to assign an arbitrary value to the logical form of the intention or, if it is in turn replaced by a logical form, to an infinite regress of analyses. The value of the content, or indeed the content itself, is an illusion. But we ourselves, we mathematicians, are ingredient in this illusion. The attempt to overcome this self-embarrassment is well-known, and is based upon a radical reinterpretation of the mathematical consciousness or (in its original form) the Cartesian *cogito.* The function of the *cogito* in Descartes's own philosophy has often been exaggerated, mainly because of the use to which it was put in German philosophy, but also because we read the *Meditations* today without taking seriously Descartes's remark to Mersenne that the treatise is a disguised version of his physics. However this may be, Descartes does propound the doctrine that I may doubt everything, except for the fact that I doubt, or more generally, that I cannot be mistaken that I am thinking, and so that, as thinking, I exist. (A more extensive consideration of Descartes would have to notice that mathematical truths are never called into doubt by him.) It is important to remember that, in the first radical reinterpretation of this doctrine, by Kant, the indubitable content of the *cogito* has a transcendental, and not an empirical or historical, status. Empiricists both before and after Kant have argued that the fact that I think is no basis for logical inferences about the essential stability, continuity, or nature, of the thinking "I." Again put simply, as the argument goes, I have no guarantee that the "I" who is at this moment thinking, is logically or substantially the same as the "I" who thought yesterday or who perhaps will think tomorrow.

Such an argument, incidentally, is based upon the belief that the continuity of the "I" requires logical or discursive demonstration. But demonstration is necessarily undertaken by an "I" to or for an "I." The "I"-by-whom need not be numerically the same as the "I"-to-whom. But it must be able to follow its own demonstration in order to present it to the numerically distinct "I." And this unites the two intellectually or logically if not numerically. The simplest way to state the consequence is as follows. If I am to demonstrate to myself that I cannot know myself to be the same man today that

I was yesterday, I must know that I am the same man who today remembers yesterday's pretender to my identity, and who can imagine tomorrow's candidate, and more importantly, who will tomorrow remember today's demonstration. One cannot demonstrate the continuity of identity because demonstration presupposes this continuity. Since the demonstration is intelligible to the two "I's" (whether or not these are numerically the same), their continuity must be the same. In following a demonstration, I must know that the "I" who demonstrates is continuously the same throughout the demonstration, and that I am also the same throughout the activity of following that demonstration. The force of the demonstration of discontinuity depends upon the continuity of the memory or the stability of the "I." Kant treats this stability as a logical condition, whereas his successors treat it as the principle of self-consciousness.

Kant retains the distinction between form and empirical content in his doctrine of the transcendental ego. The transcendental ego is not a self-conscious absolute spirit or daimonic version of the "I." It is the logically necessary condition for the possibility of thought. A thought is always thought by a thinker. The empirical or historical thinker, in propounding his finite, immanent, and discontinuous thought, actualizes a process that is the same for every thinker. It is not the self-consciousness of the empirical or historical thinker that is given transcendental status, but the logical categories intrinsic to the activity instantiated by every case of "I think ... such-and-such." The absence of a transcendental doctrine of self-consciousness in Kant is obvious from his doctrine of appearances and things-in-themselves. Among the latter is the individual soul. The empirical thinker is an appearance, even to himself as thinking. Only in the domain of practical reason, or morality, does he acquire direct contact with his noumenal, and presumably eternal, personality or self.

In Kant's teaching, then, the empirical or historical individual remains *alienated* from his eternal, true, or significant self. It is plain from Kant's essays on the philosophy of history that he was aware of the human, if not the transcendental, shortcomings of his own teaching. The Kantian doctrine provides us with an account of scientific knowledge, and of free will or morality. But it offers no

discursive account of the unity of knowledge and morality. Even Kant's *Critique of Judgment* attempts to overcome the disjunction between theory (scientific knowledge) and practice (morality) in terms of a logico-hypothetical doctrine of the coherence of nature and its fittingness to be thought by the human intelligence. The fact that we can make judgments of an aesthetic and purposive nature, even though these judgments cannot be explained by the logical apparatus of the transcendental ego, or by the moral doctrine of human dignity and the categorical imperative, requires us to assume that the world has been created or organized by a beneficent intelligence. But this assumption can never be transformed into rational, conceptual knowledge. To quote Kant:

> For external objects as phenomena an adequate ground related to purposes cannot be met with; this, although it lies in nature, must only be sought in the supersensible substrate of nature, from all possible insight into which we are cut off. Hence it is absolutely impossible for us to produce from nature itself grounds of explanation for purposive combinations, and it is necessary by the constitution of the human cognitive faculties to seek the supreme ground of these purposive combinations in an original understanding as the cause of the world.[23]

That is, as Kant emphasizes, it is *possible*, in the sense of not self-contradictory, to seek the ground of significance and order in the supersensible or noumenal domain, and *necessary* for us to do so in order to justify significance and coherence.[24] But we will never actually acquire this ground.

The radical distinction between form and content, present in modern rationalism from the outset, and in a way traceable back to the Platonic dialogues, is still fundamental in Kant. Kant explains the formal connection between a thinking ego and its thoughts, but not the ground of the significance of that formal connection. Very simply stated, we do not know, in the cognitive *or* intuitive senses of the term, the point to the formal connection. We do not know why the world is accessible to our intelligence, i.e., as a world. We do not know things as they are in themselves. We do not know ourselves or why we do what we ought to do. Even moral

obligation is grounded firmly in conscience or a sense of human dignity. I could not respect myself as a rational being if I did not obey the commands of the categorical imperative. Man gives himself value by virtue of a good will.[25] But the good will is essentially a willing that there be a God:

> The righteous man may indeed say: I *will* that there be a God, that my existence in this world be also an existence beyond the natural chain in a pure world of the understanding, finally also, that my duration be endless; I persist in these beliefs and will not let anyone take them away from me. For this is the only case in which my interest, because I may not relax anything of these beliefs, inevitably determines my judgment, without paying any attention to sophistries, however little I am able to answer them, or to oppose them with others more apparent.[26]

V. The Identity of Time and Eternity

I referred above to Kant's recognition of the humanly unsatisfactory character of his teaching. Unless we assume or hope that human beings are morally improving, the human comedy becomes a farce.[27] Rousseau showed that history exposes an unresolved conflict of intelligence and moral virtue. Kant asks us to believe that, on the contrary, history is moving toward the infinitely distant resolution of this conflict. Human passion or selfishness is in Hegel's phrase, the cunning of reason, and enlightened self-interest will one day guide us to universal peace or a world state.[28] Kant's essays on history suggest, then, that it possesses a dialectical structure which will finally justify God's ways before man as a finite historical individual. Rousseau taught that intelligence is itself a product of historical development. If we combine Rousseau's doctrine of the historical nature of intelligence with Kant's hope for a dialectical history, we possess the simple basis for understanding the genesis of Hegel's peculiar form of historicism. What needs to be shown is that the transcendental ego manifests itself within human history as the summation of its dialectical development, not in the infinite future, but now, in the eternal present of Hegel's own time and thought. This is not simply a theodicy in historical terms, although it is that as well.[29]

More radically, it is a resolution of the dualism between form and content, or eternity and temporality, and so it is the development of a new speculative logic which explains the process of human history as the actualization of eternity.

Let us follow Hegel and call an "empiricist" anyone who denies the discursive and complete accessibility of the eternal within time. "History" then refers to the process by which man becomes progressively aware, within time, of the complete structure of eternity. To the empiricist, on the other hand, i.e., *to everyone other than Hegel*, history is indeed a farce, and not simply on moral grounds. Mathematics, logic, and science, the proudest fruits of human reason, are transformed into historical creatures, which not only fail to account for their own or their creators' significance, but which undergo internal limitations arising from the nature of pre- (and post-) Hegelian logic, limitations that preserve forever the dualism of form and content, but that also vitiate our conception of form by paradoxes and antinomies for which only *ad hoc*, arbitrary, or stipulative remedies are available.

Hegel's ahistorical historicism does not arise from a sentiment of existence, from the tragic sense of life, or indeed from the surrender to the necessity of the internal limitations of formalism. Neither can we understand it as due to the modern rejection of classical philosophy, with the consequent emphasis upon passion, mastery, technology, and so the invention of history as a dimension of existence, indeed, as *the* dimension of existence. The only adequate way in which to approach the roots of Hegel's teaching is to understand it as a radical and comprehensive effort to overcome the *aporiai* intrinsic to classical thought, as well as those of the Christian tradition. Hegel's "modernism" amounts finally to this: the ancients tell us to know ourselves, but then add that we can know ourselves only if we know nature as a whole. The route to the knowledge of nature is a self-forgetting, and the result of taking that route is impasse or failure. Hegel attempts to carry out the original directive of classical thought. He intends to make philosophy into the rose in the cross of the present by transforming philosophy into wisdom, and the temporal present into the synthesis of eternity and temporality.

Hegel's "classicism" can be expressed as follows. For the Greeks generally, and for Plato in particular, wisdom meant primarily *phronēsis*: not just "practical intelligence" but "good judgment." A judgment is not a proposition, but the act by which a living intelligence sees that a given individual must be classified under a form that is not empirically available. Kant, in the *Third Critique*, calls this "reflecting judgment." In reflecting judgment, the person who judges is separate from the object as well as the universals under which it is subsumed. The judgment does not determine the object either sensuously or by the categories of the understanding. We see here, in the special Kantian context and terminology, the classical separation of finite man from the forms by which he analyzes the objects of his experience. In Plato, the forms are finally separate from the analytical intelligence. In Aristotle, they are accessible to the intelligence, but the latter is discursively or conceptually inaccessible to itself: there is no logical account of the divine or active intellect. Kant transforms the active intellect into the transcendental ego, but in so doing he fails to explain the relation between the analytically thinking individual and his essential or noumenal self. The capacity to judge must therefore be interpreted *as if* we possessed an explanation of the relation between the phenomenal and the noumenal, i.e., between the forms and the content of our thoughts. Imbedded within the "as if" or "ought to be" is the continuing separation of knower and known or subject and object. Therefore, ordinary experience, the *Lebenswelt*, *doxa*, or empirical history, each remains fundamentally a domain of illusion. Hegel's entire teaching is an attempt to justify and explain the comprehensive domain of experience within which all philosophical analysis begins. He thus attempts to "save the phenomena" or to complete the process initiated by the Greeks. It is easy enough to dismiss this attempt as Faustian, but to do this and nothing more is certainly to condemn oneself to the perpetual alienation that Hegel attempted to overcome. A thoughtless return to antiquity is no remedy for the absence of a rational explanation of history. Thoughtless returns are always turnings away from oneself.

Notes

1 *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1951), I, 31.
2 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), II, ii, 72.
3 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, II, ii, 66, 198.
4 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, II, ii, 203.
5 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, II, ii, 111.
6 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, II, ii, 231.
7 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, II, ii, 208.
8 Cf. *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952), p. 535: moments of *Geist* find their rest only in totality; p. 549: religion is incomplete, has only a *Vorstellung* of itself as God; p. 558: *Geist*, as time, is incomplete; p. 559: the development of *Geist* is a self-returning circle that has an end *qua* fulfillment.
9 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), II-IV, 881.
10 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II-IV, 74.
11 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II-IV, 75.
12 *Ibid.*
13 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II-IV, 30.
14 *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 558.
15 *Die Zukunft der Versöhung* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971), p. 149.
16 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, II, ii, 178.
17 *Enzyklopädie* (1830), ed. Nicolin-Pöggeler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969), paragraph 258, p. 209.
18 This has nothing to do with Aristotle's conception of time as explained in the *Physics*, contrary to Heidegger's interpretation in *Sein und Zeit*.
19 *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1955), pp. 209 f.
20 *Enzyklopädie*, paragraphs 416–39, pp. 346–54.
21 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1955), *Vorrede*, p. 17.
22 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, p. 16.
23 *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1956), paragraph 77, p. 276.
24 *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, p. 275.
25 *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, p. 313.
26 *Kritik der praktischer Vernunft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952), p. 164.
27 "Theorie und Praxis," in *Kleinere Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie Ethik und Politik* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1959), pp. 108 f.
28 For discussion of this point and references, see my *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969; Reprint with the Preface to the Portuguese Translation: South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2000).
29 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II-IV, 93 f.: "this is the true theodicy, the justification of God in history."

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Memory and Human Time

I

The problem of time has played a crucial role in the history of philosophy and science. My concern in this essay is with human or subjective time. How do we experience the present? This question reminds us at once of such late-modern thinkers as Nietzsche, James, Bradley, Bergson, Husserl and Heidegger. The most important figure in the pre-modern history of the question is probably Augustine. In the case of classical Greek philosophy, we would normally begin by noting the absence of a developed philosophical doctrine of subjectivity, and then distinguish between Aristotle's analytical approach to the nature of time and the various mythical representations in the Platonic dialogues.

I have no quarrel with the broad picture that I have just sketched. I do however wish to add one or two brush-strokes to the portrait of Plato. It is certainly true that Plato's fullest accounts of human time are mythical or poetic. Nevertheless, one can find passages in which an analytical approach is in the process of being formulated. Why are these approaches abandoned? Are we to rest content with the question-begging thesis that Plato's technical skills were not sufficiently developed, or could he perhaps have seen, and indirectly conveyed to us, the technical impossibility of a *logos* of the lived present? This is my topic, and I will take as my paradigmatic text a concentrated passage from the *Philebus*, in which Socrates discusses the role of memory and anticipation in our possession of knowledge that we are undergoing pleasure. I will also consider briefly a related passage from the *Theaetetus*. The problem to be investigated is easily stated. If the present lacks an integrity or independence that distinguishes it from the past and the future, it becomes entirely unclear how a human life is possible at all. We can live only derivatively in the past and the future. Life unfolds in the primary sense

within the present. Yet the present seems to be either an amalgam of past and future or an atemporal point, like Aristotle's *to nun*, that measures the boundary between one time and another.

II

In the *Philebus*, Socrates discusses the question of which is the most choice-worthy life for a human being, the life of pure thought or that of continuous and exclusive pleasure. Protarchus is persuaded that no one would choose either of these lives in preference to their mixture (22a5-c4). Socrates somewhat guardedly holds out the possibility that the philosopher would choose the life of pure thinking (22c5–6; cf. 27d1–2 with 33a8-b11). I will come back to this qualification shortly.

The life of pure pleasure seems easy to exclude from the contest. According to Socrates' initial statement, unless we possess intellect, memory, knowledge, true opinion, and calculation (*logismos*) we will never know that we formerly enjoyed pleasure, that we are now enjoying it, or that we will do so in the future (21b6-dl). Knowledge of this sort is personal; the pleasure in question is mine, since I am hardly likely to choose for myself a life that only someone else, or perhaps no one, can enjoy. Second, the life is temporal. It is not enough to know that one is now enjoying oneself, because the present extends into the past and the future. Stated succinctly, it takes time to enjoy pleasure.

Each of the two candidates for the blessed human life is a state (*heksis*), condition (*diathesis*), or *pathos* of the soul, namely, wisdom or pleasure (11d4, 31b3). Wisdom is plainly associated with the various intellectual powers. But it is not so clear that these powers are required in order to know that we are experiencing pleasure. To paraphrase a famous recent epistemologist, it depends upon what we mean by "to know." More precisely, we need to distinguish between "being aware of" something and possessing discursive knowledge of it. This distinction will be of help to us when we try to distinguish between the present on the one hand and the past and future on the other.

The case of pleasure is far from unique; a similar analysis could be made of any feeling such as fear, love, hatred, and so on. Each feeling

has many causes, the nature of which may alter our assessment of the feeling in question as genuine or spurious, yet none of which requires something outside itself by which to identify it as *mine*. To undergo a feeling such as pleasure is itself to be aware of that feeling. It will not do to suggest that the awareness may belong to someone other than myself, since this judgment already entails a grasp of the difference between me and someone else. On this suggestion, I would now be in the position of saying that the pleasure I feel is being felt, not by me, but by someone else. And this is absurd. The most one could claim is that someone else feels it *in addition to me* ("I feel your pleasure" makes as much or as little sense as "I feel your pain").

In sum, not to be aware of one's own pleasure is equivalent to not being pleased. If it were actually possible to separate pleasure from all forms of awareness, this would in no way be a genuine human life, namely, one that I can live. To anticipate, the same can be said of a life of pure thought. What is required for the life of pure pleasure is then the undergoing of pleasure itself, which includes in my undergoing it my awareness that I am so affected. If I am not so affected, I am not undergoing pleasure, and I have not received the life that I attempted to choose.

If we restrict ourselves to lives that can actually be lived, then awareness that it is I who am living my life is essential to my choosing it for myself. It should be obvious that there is a connection between awareness and the temporal present. I can be aware that I am now remembering something or anticipating it, just as I can remember that I was formerly aware, say, of some pleasure, or anticipate that I will be so once more in the future. But in these last two cases, I must now be aware that I am remembering or anticipating, and the temporal *topos* in which I achieve this awareness is the present. Awareness is the human face of the "now" (*to nun*). To continue the metaphor, the human face can turn backwards and forwards (to the past and the future), but it can do so only because its primary residence is the present.

It should also be added that even if we could live a life of pure thinking, as Socrates suggests at 33a8, we would have to be aware

of the fact that we ourselves were living this life, and not someone else. No one, not even a god, could choose to live a life that he or she will not in fact live. And if I am not aware that this life is mine, then it is not mine, I cannot be said to be living it. But if I am aware that this life is mine, I must be aware that it was also mine previously, for as long as I can remember, and that it will be mine for as long as I live. In slightly different terms, it is intrinsic to the meaning of "human life" that we live it temporally. The atemporal contemplation of eternity is not a life. To live is to be aware that one is living temporally, and it would be absurd to contend that one is living in the past and future. Once again we arrive at a connection between awareness and the temporal present.

However this may be, Socrates in effect grants that a life containing both thinking and pleasure is superior to a life that contains only one of these, and one of the requisite pleasures is that of knowledge (51e7–52a4). More generally, we can say that the pleasantness of thinking is inseparable from my recognition that it is I who am thinking and possessing knowledge. Once again, if this were not so, the life that sustains anonymous thinking only would not be mine, nor could I be said to have chosen it. One of the questions raised indirectly by the *Philebus*, but not addressed by Socrates, is how a life of pure thinking could be anything but anonymous. If we are entirely occupied by the contemplation of Platonic Ideas or the eternal order, there can be no reference in our thoughts to our temporal self, which becomes oblivious of itself and thereby loses any awareness that it is reaping as it sowed. One might well suspect that the happiness that comes from the mixed life is due to the pleasure we feel at thinking, rather than to the thinking itself.

However this may be, I venture the remark that thinking is pleasant because we humans are incomplete. If we were perfectly wise, as Socrates asserts of the gods and holds to be possible for some human beings (33a8 ff.), we would experience no pleasure at all. For reasons of this sort, human time arises with the mixed life, because it is with the mixed life—a life that includes direction, purpose, rank-ordering, attraction and repulsion, and so pleasure and pain—that self-awareness or a sense of inwardness is to be found. It is in this

self-awareness that we possess our lives as (in each case) *mine*, not in the exercise of pure thought. From this standpoint, the activity of investigating the best life is itself superior to the living of the life of pure thought, assuming the latter were possible, since we could not know that we were living it. More precisely, it would not be a life.

III

From these preliminary remarks, it follows that Socrates must make explicit the structure of human time as an essential aspect of his analysis of the good life. We will expect something to be said about the memory as our connection to the past, and about anticipation as the connection with the future. But something more is required, namely, an account of our awareness of the present. It is here that trouble arises.

The discussion of memory and anticipation in the *Philebus* is embedded within an extremely complex analysis of pleasure and sense-perception. For my present purposes, it is not necessary to study the entire analysis. I restrict myself to the required minimum. Socrates begins with a general definition of pleasure as the *pathos* that arises in living beings upon the recovery of natural harmony from an antecedent dissolution, whereas pain is the dissolution of harmony (31d4–10). He goes on to distinguish two kinds of pleasure and pain. The first belongs to the combination of body and soul. For example, the pleasure of eating arises from a return to the harmony after the dissolution caused by hunger. Other examples include thirst and drinking as well as enduring and removing oneself from extremes of heat and cold (31e8–32b4).

The second kind belongs to the soul taken apart from the body (32c4–6). There are two species of this kind, corresponding to anticipation (*prosdokēma*) and memory. Anticipation takes the form of hope for future pleasure and fear of future pain from the affections of the soul just described (32b9-c2), namely, those that arise from the conjoint agitation of the body and the soul (*to toutōn tōn pathēmatōn*). Strikingly enough, it is Protarchus who introduces the pure pleasures of the soul taken apart from the body, which arise from anticipation of their recurrence. Neither Socrates nor Protarchus proceeds directly to the pleasures of memory.

Instead, Socrates shifts to the consideration of living beings in whom neither destruction nor preservation of harmony is occurring. He claims that this gives us a third condition (*diathesis*) in addition to pleasure and pain, namely, the absence of both. Borrowing a term that will be introduced shortly, we may call this condition *anaisthēsia* (34a1). Socrates emphasizes how important it is to remember this condition (an interesting anticipation of his next theme) and then asserts that nothing hinders a human being from living such a life. I have already considered this passage, and proceed to "the other species [*eidos*] of pleasure which belongs to the soul alone" and which originates in memory (33c5–6).

With the usual confusing lack of orderly procedure that is a characteristic of the *Philebus*, despite its emphasis upon the method of eidetic arithmetic, Socrates says that in order to clarify pleasure, we must first take up sense-perception (*aisthēsis*: 33c8-11). To anticipate, the reason is undoubtedly because memory will shortly be defined as the "preservation of perception" (34a10). Again I restrict myself to the main point. There are two kinds of affections (*pathēmatōn*) of the body. Those of the first kind are extinguished before they arrive at the soul, which is left "apathetic" or unaffected in this case. The second kind pass through both body and soul and cause an agitation (*seismon*) in each of them as well as in both taken together.

Socrates first suggests that the soul fails to take notice, that is, is unaware of (*lanthanein*) those agitations which occur in the body but do not arrive at the soul, whereas it is not unaware of those that do (33d8-l0). This raises a terminological ambiguity that Socrates clarifies. To be unaware of something (*lelēthenai*) does not produce forgetfulness (*lēthē*). "Forgetfulness is the exodus of memory (*mnēmē*)," which has not yet occurred in those who are unaware of the ostensibly forgotten item. "It would be odd, wouldn't it, to speak of some loss (*apobolē*) occurring in that which is not and has not yet come to be" (33e2–6).[1] Protarchus is therefore asked to change the terminology as follows. In order to avoid the error of associating *lanthanein* with loss of memory when it is apathetic to the agitations in the body, "what you now call *lēthē* let us rename *anaisthēsia*" (33e7–34a2[2]).

In commenting on this passage, I note first that what is under discussion is the memory of a mixed or conjoint agitation of the body and the soul, not an agitation of the soul alone, as for example, a pure pleasure aroused by thinking. Just as in the discussion of anticipation, there is no reference in the passage we are inspecting to pure pleasures of the soul. If this definition of memory is supposed to hold good for the entire dialogue, then memory is in every case dependent upon an antecedent sense-perception. Second, the word "memory" refers to our capacity to retain past experiences. More precisely, the experience is accessible for present consideration; but it need not be continuously before the mind's eye. In other words, a speech or a deed is imprinted within the memory, or as Socrates says, it enters into the body and the soul and causes an agitation or motion in both. This agitation, in the case of the soul, is the process by which the item is imprinted within, or retained by, the memory. I believe we can go one step farther. In order to remember something, it is not enough to be agitated or moved by the item in question. We must also take notice of it in some way. Memory is rooted in present apprehension, or what I call awareness. Socrates makes this point as follows. If the affection (*pathēma*) does not go through, i.e., agitate, both body and soul, the soul is "unaware of" (*lanthanein*) that agitation, whereas if the affection does go through both body and soul, then the soul is not unaware of it (33d8–10).

It is no inferential leap to take "not unaware of" to mean "be aware of," i.e., to apprehend. But being aware of something is the precondition for memorizing; it is not memorizing itself. And we are aware in the present, not the past. To this I add that when we remember, we do not return to the past but instead evoke the past within the present. Furthermore, if the agitation does not "go through" the soul, then there is no apprehending, and hence no forgetting. By referring to lack of apprehension, or failure to take note of, as *anaisthēsia*, Socrates reminds us that the pleasures of which he speaks derive originally from co-agitation with the body. In sum, it looks as though the pleasures of the soul alone cannot be remembered. This is in agreement with my earlier contention that the life of pure thinking is anonymous.

Some pleasures may take place in the soul alone, but they have their origins in the conjoint agitation of body and soul. *Anaisthēsia* refers here to the absence of agitation and its correlative apprehension in the soul, but not to the absence of agitation in the body. The word has a similar sense in modern English. If we are anesthetized in order to undergo surgery, the body is agitated whereas the soul presumably is not. Thus we would not say, "I forgot the entire experience of the surgery" but rather "I was never aware that surgery was taking place."

In sum: "forgetting" is the loss of a memory, which in turn is rooted in the taking notice of some agitation that has reached the soul through the body. Memory is dependent upon perception. We can distinguish three components here. First, an agitation. Second, a taking notice of. Third, an imprinting or remembering.

Next, Socrates defines perception (*aisthēsis*) at 34a3–5 as the joint agitation of the soul and the body. This confirms my statement that memory is rooted in perception. Socrates says quite explicitly: "memory is the preservation of perception" (*sōtērian aisthēseōs*: 34a10). There is no talk here of an agitation that bypasses the body and occurs in the soul only. In particular, there is no reference to a purely noetic apprehension of Platonic Ideas, or what is elsewhere called "recollection" (*anamnēsis*). Instead, Socrates defines recollection as the taking up or receiving of the soul by itself, apart from the body, of an agitation it previously suffered conjointly with the body (34b6–8).

Socrates claims that there is a difference between memory and recollection. Memory activates a sense perception, whereas recollection activates a memory. As Socrates explains this point, the memory must evoke the bodily agitation of the original affection, whereas when we recollect, we do so exclusively within the soul. The difference seems to be something like this. I may remember a toothache so vividly as to agitate the body again, as if I were currently experiencing the toothache. But twenty years later, I may recollect the experience of remembering an old toothache and feel no pain at all.

I must say that I do not find this satisfactory. A memory is not itself a sensation; if it were, I would not remember an old toothache

so much as have a new one. If I remember former experiences, I say metaphorically that I am reliving the past, but this is not literally true. I can of course have a fantasy that I am reliving the past, and the sensations may be extremely vivid, but they will not be the same as the sensations of the past experience. If they were, then the two experiences would be the same. But this is nonsense. Furthermore, if a recollection takes up or activates a memory, and if a memory is part perception, then the taking up of the memory must be the taking up of the ingredient perception; and recollection is then the co-agitation of soul and body, contrary to what Socrates says.

And here is another consideration. No one would say that we have forgotten a perception simply because we are not actually recalling it to mind. The perception is somehow stored up and ready for activation. Similarly, recollection is not a remedy for forgetting, but the activation of a memory (which is itself of a perception). It would therefore be accurate to call recollection the preservation of memory. What happens to the memory or the recollection when we are not actually remembering or recollecting it? Should we not distinguish between "storing" and "evoking" in the case of memory and recollection? And is not the act of "taking note of" something distinct from remembering in the sense of storing it up for future use? This was one of my previous points. We have three elements here, taking note of (i.e., being aware of), storing up, and evoking. These elements or acts are common to memory and recollection.

How about forgetting? Socrates defined it as the exodus of sense-perception. In order to be subject to forgetting (*lēthē*), the perception must have been originally noted and registered or stored. Otherwise it would be *anaisthēsia*, not *lēthē*. Is there an analogue to forgetting in the case of recollection? It seems that there must be, since we can't reactivate something of which we were never aware. Socrates refers to this process as another sense of recollection itself; namely, as the finding of a lost memory, "whether of a sense-perception or of some learning" (34b10-c2). This last phrase is a modification of what we were told previously. It now allows for memories of learning or knowledge, and this seems to open the door to agitations of the soul alone. In other words, Socrates here silently modifies his definition

of memory to make it something more than just the preserving of sense perceptions. This is a heavy burden to hang on one phrase, but Platonic hermeneutics requires us to save the phenomena. What we do not know is why Plato writes in this apparently haphazard manner.

The passage we have now considered starts with a conjoint agitation of the soul and the body in one *pathos*. This is *aisthēsis* (34a3–5). Socrates does not state explicitly in this definition that there is a taking note of the conjoint agitation. He does not say that there is thinking or cognitive awareness that the soul and body are being agitated. For this reason, the exact meaning of "not to be unaware" is unclear. Nevertheless, it is obvious that we must import awareness into the process of perception. The entire passage at least implies that the soul is aware that it is being agitated. Not to be so aware is to be apathetic or anesthetic.

Socrates takes it for granted, but I make it explicit, that this awareness of agitation lies in the present. This has to be made still more precise. At one moment, I am not agitated. At the next moment, I begin to be aware of an agitation. The moment at which I am first aware of this agitation is the present, but so too is each moment during which I feel the agitation as continuing. Furthermore, in a continuing motion, whereas moment 1 is awareness but not memory, each succeeding moment of awareness is also memory of its antecedents. This is more or less what Husserl means by "retention." If I am sitting in a dentist's chair and undergoing a painful procedure that lasts for five minutes, I do not forget at minute 2 that I was agitated by pain during minute 1. So memory and perception operate almost simultaneously, and I say "almost" on the assumption that the first moment of the agitation is awareness but not memory. Still, awareness includes being imprinted, for if the first moment is not preserved, none of its successors will be. Each of these becomes the first if we fail to retain its antecedents.

The upshot of this analysis is that it is almost impossible to distinguish between the work of awareness and memory. And this is true with respect to thoughts as well as to sense perceptions. It therefore seems to be almost impossible to distinguish the present from

the past. The problem is something like that of Achilles and the turtle. In both cases, there is no solution if we just keep dividing a line of points, whether these are spatial or temporal. To restrict ourselves to the temporal case, we arrive at the present, or more precisely the lived present, only by unifying a stretch of temporal points, i.e., moments, and the principle of unification is not itself an extension or collection of points. It is not subject to arithmetical quantification. In this way, it is like what Bergson called *durée*. To give just one example, it takes a multiplicity of moments of clock-time for us to be aware that we are now in the present. But how many? Our sense that we are now living, now thinking, now undergoing a sensation or now having an experience, is not like that of moving from one point to another but rather of occupying a unified place, of ourselves being an expanding point. These expressions are very crude, but so is our cognitive grip on the lived present. From an existential standpoint, we retain within the present what is from a chronometrical standpoint the past.

Let me repeat this important conclusion. The act of taking note cannot be nothing but being agitated. I can agitate a bottle of orange juice, but the bottle does not take note of that agitation. Furthermore, perception requires awareness but also memory. A computer can memorize or record information, but it cannot perceive independently of the cognitive activities of its programmer. In short, we cannot undergo sense-perception, as Socrates defines it, without becoming aware of a sensation of some sort.

IV

There is another peculiarity in Socrates' account of memory. He defines it as the preservation of *aisthēsis*. But the latter seems to be devoid of thinking in any sense other than that of awareness of present agitation. Hence memory does not seem to involve cognition in any sense other than current awareness of past agitations. But even if memory should include perceptual judgments, we are still at its mercy so far as the identification of perceived entities is concerned. If I am at this instant aware of a tree, I will retain this awareness at the next instant only through remembering its predecessor.

Otherwise put, if awareness were instantaneous, i.e., if it lasted in all cases for exactly one instant, with no continuity whatsoever, then we would have no experience of anything. Life would be a discontinuous series of dots or flashes.

The least one can say is that awareness is both taking note of and remembering. But memory is both awareness and preservation. That is, when we actually remember something we have preserved, we bring it into presence. The moment of awareness, or rather re-awareness, is the moment of the present. There is no distinction within the living process of cognition, that is, no actual independence of these various faculties. The great difficulty this leads to is that we are at the mercy of memory in our assessment of experience, and in particular with respect to the question of the identification of perceptual objects. We cannot extract ourselves from the activity of memorizing in order to take direct note of the object of perception, as it is independent of our perceiving it, unless there is a dimension of perception, a way of taking note, that is not already memory. In other words, Socrates has not satisfactorily analyzed the link, in a way self-evident, between present consciousness and memory. This is another instance of his silence about the present. The passage also shows that there is some kind of cognitive activity, which I am calling "awareness" or "taking notice of," intrinsic to *aisthēsis*, that is not the same as discursive or theoretical reasoning (*dianoia* or *noēsis*).

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates says that whereas we perceive separate kinds of sensation through separate bodily organs, these sensations unite "in one idea, whether we should call it soul or something else," by which we perceive, i.e., take note of (*aisthanometha*) the *aisthēta* or sensed items *through* the senses, which serve as conduits or instruments for the single power, faculty, or however one should translate *idea* in this passage (184d1–5). The soul thus as it were constructs the sensed item from the separate sensations, whereas in considering such common properties as being, non-being, sameness, difference, and so on, the soul, as Theaetetus says and Socrates enthusiastically agrees, observes these properties entirely by itself, or in other words, without any constructive activity (185d6-e2). There are no separate instruments, as in the case of sense-perception,

that furnish the soul with distinct elements of the common property. It is therefore extremely important to determine whether the process by which we obtain "data" from our sensory instruments is itself made possible by an initial contact with the unified source of the agitations that we combine into the object of perception.

There are two different ways in which to regard the results of sense-perception as described by Socrates. On the one hand, we can say that since memorization occurs concomitantly with awareness of physical agitations, we retain within our consciousness an accurate picture of the external world. On the other hand, we can say that the picture we retain is dependent upon the accuracy of the memory, and there is just no external standard by which to measure this accuracy. Note that regardless of which position we hold, the facts of experience remain the same. We still engage in perception and judgment, accumulate experiences, form generalizations and check them against those experiences, and in short go about our business as if the world existed more or less as we perceive it. Even most everyday problems of perception can be resolved for all practical purposes without sacrificing that belief.

What, if anything, can we infer about the nature of perception from our everyday experience? The line of analysis we are now pursuing suggests the following answer. We can identify various aspects of perception, including the excitation of the senses (or what Socrates would call agitation of the body or the "instruments" of the soul), awareness, memory, and recollection, and we can describe the process by which we employ these faculties to identify objects. So far as ordinary experience is concerned, it makes no sense to ask whether objects exist external to our cognitions, because experience is precisely of such externally existing objects. Even a scientific analysis of perception, incidentally, does not refute the assumption that there is an external world; it rather alters our beliefs about the nature of that world.

Now it is of course not true that security about the external world solves the problem about the epistemic value of *aisthēsis* or perception. If anything, it may complicate the issue or render perception even more dubious as an instrument of knowledge. If the

world were a construction of inner sense, and especially if it were a transcendental construction, then we would exercise a direct grip on the objects of experience. Indeed, to experience would already be to know. On the other hand, this alternative poses its own problems, prominent among them the problem of how there can be false perceptual judgments. Socrates does not explicitly raise the question whether objects exist apart from our perception of them. But this problem follows directly from his definition of perception. As I said above, everything depends upon the reliability of the memory. This reliability is well-established in everyday life, but as soon as we formulate the philosophical question of whether we are remembering what exists, we raise the question of the grounds on which such a question can be answered. And there are none. It is impossible to step outside of the memorizing that essentially defines perception, in order to observe the objects of perception as they are independent of being memorized.

If the joint agitation of the body and soul in *aisthēsis* were from the outset the activation of memory, or in other words if sense impressions registered directly in the memory, then we would be detached from the actual objects of perception by the very act of perceiving them. The actual perceptual contact would be in the past, relative to the awareness or taking note via the memory of those objects. There would then be no standard by which to distinguish between the memory and the imagination, which is the situation that obtains in British empiricism. Hume for example makes this distinction on the basis of the vivacity of our impressions, but this is obviously inadequate, since imaginary sensations are not infrequently more vivacious than presumed impressions of actual items. The term "actual" has no sense here of independence *from the process of sensation itself.*

This is not, however, what Socrates is saying. He is not a British empiricist, among other reasons because he assumes that in remembering, we memorize something external, namely, physical agitations not in the sense of impressions but rather in the sense of motions produced by bodies upon our own, and hence by external bodies. In other words, if one can attribute impressions to Socrates'

account of perception, they are impressed upon us by external objects. Furthermore, in the *Philebus* passage, there is no mention of the assemblage or construction of objects out of disparate sensations, as in the *Theaetetus*. In the *Philebus* passage, Socrates does not identify the content of memorization, that is, he does not tell us whether memory is recording sensations like colors, sounds, tastes, and so on, or whether it is recording bodies. Since his account is entirely general, we must assume, unless told to the contrary, that it is intended to cover perception entirely, and in particular, the perception of bodies about which we make judgments. This will become explicit very shortly, when Socrates tells a little story about *aisthēsia* involving the mythical figures of the painter and writer in the soul. I have discussed that story elsewhere in great detail and will say nothing about it here.[3] Instead, I emphasize the following cautionary note.

If we overlook for a moment the difference between memory and recollection, we are liable to take Socrates to be saying that memory is not only inseparable from perception, but that to perceive is just to remember. It then becomes easy for us to overlook the distinction between remembering something that happened previously, and memorizing something that is now transpiring. Socrates is referring to the latter sense of memory. The former sense is restricted by him to recollection, and by "what happened previously" he means memories. Recollection does not have direct contact with perception. But neither is perception a process of recollecting some previous perception; if it were, of course, it would again lead to an infinite regress. The separation between memory and recollection isolates memory and restricts it to the role of recording ongoing agitations. This leaves unexplained the initiation of perception. In order to explain it, we had to import "not being unaware of" into the account, and to give it a positive sense of "taking note of."

V

Enough of textual exegesis. I turn to my conclusion, which will take the form of an extended general remark. I have hoped to establish that in both memory and recollection, there is an initial step called

"taking note of," which is the same as Socrates' expression "not being unaware of" (33d9). In other words, memory is of the past, but it is initiated within the present as taking note of and storing up. Socrates draws virtually no attention to this fact, perhaps because he regards it as obvious. But philosophy is very often the analysis of the obvious.

In the case of recollection, the situation is as follows. When we recollect, we may be said to "take note of" in the sense of relocating a memory that has been lost. I who recollect am in the present, albeit what I am recollecting is "past" in two senses. First, the memory has been recaptured from the past, and second, the memory is itself of a past event. So in this minimal and indispensable sense, memory and recollection both take place in the present, despite their orientation with respect to the past.

One could therefore describe a person who is currently remembering (or recollecting) something as securely situated within the present, even though that person is "lost in his (or her) thoughts" or "reliving the past." For example, we could describe his current bodily motions or register any sounds that he utters as he reviews his memory or recollection. Harder but perhaps not impossible would be a description of the present psychological condition of someone who is remembering or recollecting the past. We might describe ourselves as now remembering something: "I seem to see a small wooden house, with a candle in the window and Santa Claus sliding down the chimney." Or perhaps we could make more complicated descriptions of what it is to remember. Furthermore, although we might prefer to live in the past, that is, by a review of our memories and recollections, rather than to focus upon the present, it remains the case that we "relive" the past only metaphorically, because we are alive in the present, not in the past. When we say that "life is past" or "my youth is gone," we mean that it cannot be relived, but at best only remembered.

It is to me very striking that throughout his discussion of memory and recollection, just as in the case of anticipation, Socrates does not emphasize the present. This is in a way perfectly understandable, since after all, memory and recollection are of or *about* the past,

not the present. We don't say "I remember what I am now doing." But we are nevertheless doing something now when we remember or recollect. Socrates is explaining memory and recollection in the dramatic present, not in the past or the future. And not only do memory and recollection themselves take place in the present, but they are initiated by an apprehension of the present, which is then interiorized so as to become a record of the past. I presently remember the past, but the past was once a present. Similar remarks could of course be made about anticipation.

I want to make the following suggestion. As we analyze human temporality, the temptation is very great to dwell upon the past and the future, or as in the *Philebus*, upon memory and anticipation, because the temporal present is extremely difficult to locate and define. For one thing, the lived present is either always slipping away into the past or emerging from the future. It does not seem to stand still or endure. Or if we treat it as enduring, we seem to depart from its temporal character and to define it in terms of some event or experience that stops time rather than undergoes it. All in all, the present is a most mysterious thing.

I think it is pretty clear that the "lived present" is not the same as the "now" that we attach to each passing moment, and in fact, that it is not properly described as made up of moments. If it were, we would then have to answer the question "how many moments are there in the present?" Obviously the present cannot be a moment, since if it were, it would either be filled up with moments or else be gone before we could properly occupy it. I have dealt with this problem elsewhere,[4] but I wanted to mention it at this point, because it is suggested by the discussion of anticipation and memory. The implication in this discussion is that the present is made of remembering (together with recollecting) and anticipating. We must be in the present as we remember or anticipate, but the difficulty in locating the present makes it almost inevitable to think of it as slipping away into the past, or being remembered, or as emerging constantly from the future, and so as being anticipated. We tend to explain life as the condition of having lived or being about to live. But this is extremely odd, since "having lived" and "being about to live" mean "not now living."

Here is another way to state the same problem. Taking note or being aware of is necessarily an act that takes place in the present. It is today very fashionable to criticize ontologies of presence. But if thinking is to be possible at all, even if we are thinking of something that used to be or that will be, it is false to say that we used to think of it or that we will think of it. On the contrary, when I think, I pass through the present. And I can't do this unless something is present to me, even if that "something" is just the past and the future.

I want to express this difficulty in one more way. There is no formal or conceptual analysis of the exact structure of the present moment, whether of perception or any other aspect of experience, all of which is embedded within human or lived time. I am not referring to anything that could be cleared up by neurophysiology. Whatever the biochemical explanation of memory, the fact remains that the physical processes in the central nervous system are reproducing affections, not producing the originals in the sense of literally returning them from the past.

Let us assume for a moment that the imprint of the original is stored in the brain and carried around with me in a latent manner until such time as I remember it. The time of the original experience or imprinting is not the same as the time of the memory of that imprint. And human existence is precisely the temporal process that includes these two events. Not even the most fanatical physicalist could plausibly maintain that we carry the past around with us in a physical form. And of course, the case is even clearer with respect to the future. Not even the most fanatical determinist could plausibly claim that the future has already occurred *within our experience*. An inspection of imprints in the central nervous system, or in some portion of the brain, points us back to the process of consciousness by which we imprinted the brain with memories. Whether our starting-point is the physical brain or human experience, we still want to know the connection between memory and awareness in the process of perception. I assume that neurophysiologists would agree that, in order for the brain to be imprinted, it must be subjected to an imprinting agitation. This is enough to pose our question.

It goes without saying that this takes us beyond the horizon of Socrates' concerns. But the problem of temporality is clearly implied by those concerns. Socrates refers throughout to the present, and yet *it seems to escape his attention*. There are at least two different ways in which to consider the present. The first I shall call ontological, although this includes all mathematical analyses of time. The second way is through myth. Since time is associated by Plato with genesis, which in turn is distinguished from *ousia* or the dimension of formal intelligibility, he treats time mythically, as in the exemplary case of the *Timaeus*. In slightly different terms, Plato treats both cosmic and human time in myth. It would complicate matters excessively to bring in a lengthy contrast with Aristotle, but one remark may be helpful. In the *Physics*, Aristotle gives a conceptual analysis of time that is certainly not mythical but is not ontological or metaphysical in the post-classical senses of those terms. It is instead an analysis of the commonsense or everyday conception of time, or in other words a kind of generalizing of human time, but in such a way as to empty it of human significance.

In the ontological approach, time is, or soon becomes, spatialized or transformed into a flow of points. The present is accordingly Aristotle's "now" or something like it. In the mythical approach, time is expressed as a story of human affections, and by "affections" I refer not to sense perceptions in the epistemological sense of the term, but to events such as those in a drama or novel. An outstanding example is Plato's myth of the reversed cosmos, told by the Eleatic Stranger in the *Statesman*. Despite the fancifulness of the myths, they are much closer to everyday human experience than is the conceptual or ontological analysis. In this approach, the present is conceived epochally or historically rather than as a continuum of moments or points. The unit of measure is, so to speak, the generation rather than the instant. The instant serves in Plato to express our removal from time through the vision of the pure Ideas. This is the reverse of the function of the instant in Nietzsche, the arch-typical modern thinker, where it designates the gateway into historical time.

To restrict myself to Plato, I suggest that he treats time mythically because this is the only way in which to bring out its human

significance. The conceptual analysis of the structure of human time is impossible in any exact sense, since it has no structure; there is no Idea of human time, any more than there is an Idea of an individual life. But even a phenomenological description of time such as Aristotle's soon abstracts from human or lived time. Odd though it sounds, one could say that Plato invents the philosophy of history with his use of myths, and that "history" should be understood here in something like its original sense of an inquiry about human affairs, with the modification that for Plato, as for Aristotle after him, poetry is more philosophical than is history understood as the ascertaining of facts.

One more observation in this line of reflection. I just asserted that there is also no Idea corresponding to the individual human life or soul. We can perhaps speak of the Idea of soul as the "principle of motion" (*Phaedrus* 245c9) or colloquially of the Idea of the just life; but none of this renders intelligible the structure of the individual life of a real human being. Instead of engaging in ontological analyses of human existence, which, precisely if they were to succeed, would leave human life far behind, Plato presents us with myths or stories of human beings at work in the process of living. His presentation is of course "perspectival," but not in the sense that it is the articulation of a personal system. The perspective of the dialogues is that of philosophy, that is, of human beings who attempt to live the philosophical life and the greater number who do not. My general suggestion, thus, is that for the Platonist, an ontology of human existence does not illuminate life but instead obscures and falsifies it. By turning human existence into a formal structure, one kills the soul or extinguishes the life one is studying. This is the reification of Being, not the so-called doctrine of Platonic Ideas.

As the author of a long book on the *Sophist*, I understand the desire to make everything clear in a Platonic dialogue, but unfortunately one has to distinguish between Plato's view of clarity and our own. One has to understand, not just conceptually or philologically, but if I may dare to say so, existentially, what it means to "give a *logos*" (*logon didonai*). And that is the heart of Platonic hermeneutics.

Notes

1 My translation follows Benardete closely: *The Tragedy and Comedy of Life*, Translated with a Commentary by Seth Benardete (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993).

2 See Bury's notes to 33e in *The Philebus of Plato*, Edited, with Introduction, Notes, and Appendices, by J. B. Bury (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897).

3 In *Metaphysics in Ordinary Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999; Reprint: South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, forthcoming), chapters two and five.

4 In *Metaphysics in Ordinary Language, op. cit.*, chapter two.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Human Temporality in Plato, Husserl, and Heidegger

Heidegger and his followers have claimed that an ontological analysis of human existence is the necessary prerequisite for political philosophy. To state this claim with a certain concision, before we can face the issue of the proper polity, we must get right with Being. One could easily think that this is a Platonic thesis. In the *Republic*, for example, Socrates argues that the just or beautiful city depends for its realization upon philosopher-kings, who in turn are defined as masters of dialectic, that is to say, of knowledge of the Ideas. Let us call this ontology. One could also cite the *Phaedrus* (270c1 ff.), where Socrates and his companion seem to agree that we cannot say anything worthwhile about the soul unless we understand the whole of nature.[1]

There is, however, a great difference between Plato and Heidegger on this point. The Heideggerian analysis of human existence does not simply culminate in, but is at all stages saturated by, the centrality of time. An ontology of human existence is for Heidegger necessarily an ontology of human temporality. In the Platonic dialogues, human life is presented dramatically and poetically, as in the form of the great myths of soul, city, and cosmos. The ascent to what one might call ontology in Plato is an ascent away from the soul, city, and cosmos toward the eternal Ideas. To state this in another way, the dialogues are themselves the dramatic portrayal of human life as primarily political; but this portrait exhibits an inner tension away from the practico-production of politics toward theory. One almost has the impression that for Plato, politics in its poetical or dramatic or mythical representation is the foundation for ontology.

I have to qualify the preceding account by the observation that, strictly speaking, there is no ontology in Plato. But his

general thesis is unmistakably that the investigation of the natures of beings, including the human being, leads to the intellectual perception of the Ideas, in both their uniqueness and their *koinōnia* or communion with one another. Whether the discussion of that perception is itself poetical or political must remain the topic for another talk. I am today interested in a different issue. In the dramatic portrait of human time, there are occasional discussions of time itself. But there is no sustained discursive account of the present. It goes without saying that the present figures in such myths as that of the reversed cosmos, but in a way that takes it for granted. When Socrates speaks prose about the characteristics of human temporality, however, he concentrates, as is in a way natural, on the past and the future.

I restrict myself to an important example from the *Philebus*. In this dialogue, Socrates speaks of the "anticipation" of future pleasures and pains of the soul, or hope on the one hand and fear on the other (32b9-c5). Shortly thereafter (at 33c5 ff.), Socrates begins an important discussion of memory and recollection, as part of his general consideration of our experience of pleasure and pain. He says first that the pleasures of the soul itself, apart from the body, all come into being through memory. Socrates then leads Protarchus to agree to the following distinction. Some corporeal affections (*pathēmata*) are extinguished within the body before they enter into the soul, which is accordingly "apathetic" toward them. Other affections enter into both the body and the soul and cause a shaking (*seismon*) or motion in both conjointly (33d2–7).

This leads to the following crucial distinction. If the *pathēma* or affection does not agitate the body and soul together, the soul is "unaware of" (*lanthanein*) that agitation. If however the agitation jointly shakes the body and soul, then the soul "is not unaware of" (*mē lanthanein*) but rather "takes note of" the aforementioned agitation. The state of being unaware, or not taking note of, has nothing to do with forgetfulness; we cannot forget what we never knew. Not being unaware, which I have paraphrased as "taking note of," must refer to the stage in which the sensation is actually present to, or cognized by, the soul. Instead of identifying this stage as the

present, however, Socrates assimilates it into the memory, i.e., the act of remembering the past. Memory is defined as "the preservation of sensation" (34a10). Finally, recollection is the taking up, i.e., the taking note, by the soul of some sensation that it previously experienced conjointly with the body.

In sum: I remember and recollect in the present, which is indicated as the stage of "taking note of" or "taking up." But this stage is itself defined as the exercise of remembering and recollecting. If this analysis were sound and complete, then life, or the actual undergoing of sensations, would be lived in the past. By this I mean that even if the sensation were occurring now, I would be experiencing it by the activity of memorizing or recalling it to memory. And a similar analysis obtains in the case of anticipation and the future.

What we want from Socrates is a third faculty or stage of sentient life corresponding to the present, in which we are neither memorizing, recollecting, nor anticipating, but rather fully engaged with sensations and cognitions. We want an analysis or account of "taking note" that is so to speak the empirical counterpart to the intellectual perception of the pure Ideas. If something is present in the form of a memory or an anticipation, it is actually not present. By effectively equating experience, that is, pleasure and pain in the soul and the body, with the representation of what we have experienced or anticipate that we may experience, the argument leads to the reconstitution of the present as absence. It looks so far as if Plato, or his Socrates in the *Philebus*, is a proto-Heideggerian rather than a partisan of presence. I repeat: in the passage from the *Philebus*, the present is dubiously present in the expression *mē lanthanein*, "not to be unaware of," which I have taken the liberty of paraphrasing as "taking note of." But Socrates does not give this stage an existence independent of an existential orientation toward the past.

So far as I am aware, although Socrates of course constantly alludes to the present moment or experience, attention to the present becomes thematic in the dialogues only as the noetic perception of the eternal Ideas. And in this case it is either simply asserted or characterized within mythical or metaphorical discourse. In other words, Socrates regularly says that "we do" or "we say" or that we

are to "consider this" and so on. He also speaks of the perception of something in a way that takes it for granted that the object of perception must be present to the perceiver. In general, he speaks of perceiving, speaking, thinking and so on in a way that makes no sense except upon the assumption that our experience is taking place within the present, even though it arrives from the future in some sense and disappears into the past. But Socrates has no technical term to refer to what I am going to call *presentification*, whereas he has perfectly good and familiar terms, memory and anticipation, to refer to the past and the future.

I am suggesting that for Plato, as for all of us most of the time, the present is obvious. It is where we obviously are when we discuss the past and the future. Certainly I am not reading this paper to you from some point in the future, although I *will* read the part that I have not yet read, just as the part that I have already read is in some sense in the past, so far as we are *presently* concerned. You might conceivably be memorizing my talk as I read it, but there is a necessary distinction between your taking note of, that is, apprehending, my talk as I read it, and committing it to memory for future reference.

To state the decisive point, whereas the act of memorizing may be taking place in the present, there must be something that is occurring *which* you are memorizing, and so which is not identical with the act of memorizing itself. You can memorize my paper as I am speaking it, but it is I who am speaking it, not you who are memorizing it. You cannot memorize what you have not taken note of. This is all the more obviously true of remembering. If taking note of were identical with remembering, then our present experience would be of the past. There would be no access to taking note in the sense of attending to the present as that which we are about to memorize, or even that which we are in the process of memorizing.

It is wrong to refer to apprehending in the present or taking note of currently as memorizing or remembering. The correct analysis is as follows. First we take note of something as now happening; we perceive or understand it. Perception and understanding may

be imprinted upon the memory or they may not, and they may be imprinted in part or altogether. But the imprinting of a present experience within the memory, i.e., memorizing in the sense of retaining the present as it presents itself, is not the same as remembering some past experience. It would be much better to say that the act of remembering begins in the present as subordinate to or dependent upon rather than identical with it; it is the grasping of the present as the basis for memory. The past, exactly like the future, exists nowhere but in the present, in the form of memory and anticipation. In short: there is no way that we can leave the present, in the sense of existing in the past or future. Even if there were time travel, the present would be wherever we are at the moment.

Nevertheless, it will be objected, the present is bounded by the past and the future, which are constitutive of the present in various ways. I agree, but to be bounded by, or even to possess as constituents, is not the same as "to be reducible to." I am bounded by what I have understood of the problem of human time in the past and the fact that I now have only a few minutes of the future at my disposal, but I am nevertheless present before you. It is not true, or not primarily true, that I am emerging from the future and slipping into the past through an infinitesimally small aperture of the present. On the contrary, you and I are conjointly moving through the present, remembering and anticipating as we go.

The past and the future make sense only with respect to the present. The question therefore arises: if it is unsatisfactory to explain the present as a kind of infinitesimally small transition from the future to the past, what can we say of it in its own right? It is at this point that Heidegger offers us his ontology of human temporality. I shall shortly turn to the appropriate passages from *Being and Time*, and I propose to indicate that Heidegger's ontological account of the present is radically defective, for the same kind of reasons that Socrates' account, brief as it may be, is also inadequate. But Socrates never claims to be providing us with an ontology of human temporality, whereas Heidegger does make this claim. After we have looked at Heidegger, we must briefly consider whether there is any way in which to analyze the concept of the present, without falling

into the endless paradoxes to which the history of philosophy gives ample testimony.

As a bridge between the first and the second part of my paper, I offer the following remark, which is also intended to make somewhat more perspicuous the relevance of my talk to political philosophy. Plato and Heidegger look similar in that both urge us to take our bearings by the pre-philosophical domain of everyday life. There is, however, a fundamental difference between them. Plato's account has political relevance, whereas Heidegger's does not.

In the Platonic dialogues, we are given a kind of hermeneutics of human existence, as seen from the perspectives of the 35 distinct dialogues. The existence exhibited in these 35 dialogues is political, i.e., it is the life of social and political community, and the future life choices of the individual person are always to be defined within the context of the political, even if the choice is that of trans-political philosophy. Heidegger's hermeneutic of pre-philosophical life, on the other hand, is a kind of ghostly residue of Christian anthropology, or rather a version of Christian anthropology as illustrated by the anonymous tool user of some bloodless and spiritless domain that seems more like Homer's Hades than the heaven or hell of the Bible.

The implication conveyed by Plato is that the nature of human life is fully portrayed in his 35 dialogues, or that human nature is accessible to hermeneutics, which latter is not historical but is rather itself the expression of what is permanent in human nature. This can be illustrated by a contrast with Heidegger. Heidegger gives us just one account of everyday life, which is supposed to be both temporal and yet paradigmatic, namely, the account of "average everydayness" and the general processes by which we move from inauthenticity to authenticity. There are, however, no accounts of 35 or any other number of genuine lives. The historicity of the paradigm of average everydayness is inseparable from the priority of possibility to actuality, and so to the openness or uniqueness of future authentic lives. There are thus two kinds of interpretation that must be practiced by human beings. The first kind is the account of the everyday world; and this is or ought to be the same for everyone.

The second kind is the interpretation of my own authentic life, and this is different for everyone. The Platonic typology of human lives is thus reduced by Heidegger to what is ostensibly its most general level. But whereas Plato employs poetry to generate the appearance of timelessness, Heidegger employs the language of ontology in the attempt to generalize contingency and historicity.

In short, the fundamental ontologist speaks to us of historical existence as a disembodied exemplar of the academic world, and thereby transforms political or everyday life into the artifact of scientific *technē*, whereas the philosophical poet presents his hermeneutic of timelessness with a freshness and immediacy that transports us directly into the lived present. The ontological description of the temporality of human existence in my view fails to come to grips with the present, and in two senses. The first has to do with the conception of existence that is implicit in the nature of the philosophical treatise as opposed to a work of art. I will not discuss this sense further. The second sense is that Heidegger cannot articulate the conceptual structure of the present because it has no such structure. Still more precisely, Heidegger's analysis of the ecstatic structure of the three tenses of temporality is conceived as a replacement for the ontology of presence or *parousia*. But it is just the presence of things or, in the extreme case, of intelligible forms, that preserves the temporal present from dissolution into the past and the future. There is no temporal dimension in Heidegger within which a genuinely human existence, authentic or otherwise, and certainly political, can be lived. In Plato, the present is generated by the act with which we enter into the life of the philosophical drama. This is of course not philosophically sufficient. We require a more discursive explanation of how it is possible to constitute the present as the life of temporality. Alas, I have no time to attempt this, but I have done so in an essay included in a book to be published in January.[2] At the conclusion of my analysis of Heidegger's account of the present, I will just state the crucial point of that essay.

And now to Heidegger. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger offers us two distinct analyses of the structure of temporality as past, present, and future. The first account seems to treat time in a general and

preliminary way as "anticipative resoluteness."[3] Note that the term "anticipative" indicates the role of the future. The resoluteness in question, whereas it passes through the present as a residue of the past, is motivated by its directedness toward the future. In the second, immediately following account, Heidegger gives a more elaborate analysis of the authentic and inauthentic modes of temporality.[4] I want to call attention to two features of these accounts. The first is that Heidegger identifies the originative unity of the structure of concern or care (*Sorge*) as temporality (327). Since the totality of the structure of human existence (*Dasein*) is identified as *Sorge* (231), this is an essential step in Heidegger's attempt to explain activity entirely from within the horizon of temporality. Let me underline this point. According to Heidegger, all fundamental structures of *Dasein* are to be grasped as modes of the *Zeitigung der Zeitlichkeit*, the "temporalizing of temporality" (304). This of course includes *Verstehen*, and so it must include ontology as well. Otherwise put, the sense or meaning (*Sinn*) of objects replaces these objects themselves; and the senses are defined as functions of human activity, which is itself at bottom the production of temporality.

The second point of interest in Heidegger's doctrine of time is the association of the fallen or inauthentic present with a concern for the tools and things of the everyday world (328).[5] As fallen or thrown into the world, human being (*Dasein*) is dispersed among these entities and is overcome with curiosity about them (338). This curiosity prevents it from seeking its appropriate possibility for existing. Such a possibility is a kind of unifying plan or interpretation, a capacity to give sense to life as a total enterprise rather than the piecemeal process of inspecting and manipulating, and so being manipulated by, things in the world.

Curiosity is inauthentically related to the future "because it is not present in the sense of waiting [*gewärtig*] for a possibility, but demands this already merely as something actual" (*Wirkliches*: 346). By "actual," Heidegger refers to the aforementioned things in the world and the uses to which they may be put. In an alternative formulation, Heidegger says that inauthentic understanding, that is, one that is grounded primarily in actualities, "temporalizes

itself from within the inauthentic present" (*zeitigt sich aus dem Gegenwärtigen*: 338). On the other hand, "the future has priority in the ecstatic unity of original and authentic temporality" and again, "the primary phenomenon of original and authentic temporality is the future" (329). "The authentic present [*Augenblick*]...temporalizes itself from within the authentic future" (338). This confirms my previous remark about anticipation. As we can already infer, to be resolute is to be directed in a certain manner toward the future, just as, in a more colloquial usage, to be brave is to stand firm against the impending attack by the enemy.

This will suffice as a basis for the following observation. Although Heidegger denies that the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity is a rank-ordering or value judgment, it is obvious that authenticity is to be preferred to inauthenticity. Authenticity as it were replaces the noble and the just as these are understood in political life. To the extent that political life has a role in the analysis of human temporality, it must be associated with inauthenticity, although it should not, of course, be identified with "average everydayness." I would suggest that Heidegger's interpretation of National Socialism in 1933, all other considerations to one side, is absurd because it attempts to explain political action or the destiny of the folk in terms of the authentic choice of the individual *Dasein*, who is not a citizen but an ontological entity, or rather, possibility. It is very striking that inauthenticity is closely connected with the actual, whereas authenticity is equally or even more closely connected to the future, and so with the possible. Differently stated, the genuine sense of actual things in the world must be derived from the future, and furthermore, from a future that manifests itself as a possibility for interpreting, rather than as the eventual actualization of this or that possibility. Finally, the interpretation is that of the future action of the existing individual. This is in keeping with Heidegger's assertion that possibility is higher than actuality (38), and that "*Dasein* is essentially its possibility" (42).

Heidegger, in a silent but unmistakable rebuke to Husserl, replaces or tacitly equates his teacher's key conception of "the living present" with an inauthentic concern for actual entities. In other words,

whatever the adequacy of his own analysis of lived time, Husserl defines human life as the presence of actualities to consciousness. These actualities are obviously idealized descendants of the Platonic Ideas. Heidegger rejects all of this as part of his attack against "presence," and so of what I called previously "presentification." In its place, he substitutes the ontologically superior authentic present as a *Seinkönnen*. The authentic present is marked by resoluteness, but the sense of resoluteness comes primarily from the future or inactual. In sum: the authentic present derives its significance or meaning (*Sinn*) from the future, and not from the "standing opposite" (*Gegenwärtigen*) of presence. Otherwise put, the present is "living" (*lebendige*) as open to the choice of possible modes of action that are enjoined by what one truly is. Perception is no longer central to the analysis of inner time-consciousness. This is because in authentic time, there is nothing present to perceive. This is, I believe, the essential element of Heidegger's anti-Husserlian understanding of the lived or living present.

The defect of this account becomes clear when we ask ourselves how we will know which possibilities represent our genuine selves, or in what sense we can be said to constitute a self. In the first case, we are referred to such evasive resources as the silent voice of conscience; in the second, we are said to be defined by our radical negativity or anxiety before death. At no point in Heidegger's articulation of a future-centered temporality is there any reference to the presence of an actual criterion for decision or choice. The idea of conducting national, i.e., political affairs on the basis of this ontological doctrine is nonsensical. National destiny disappears into the vapidity of continuous crises of conscience. As to the self-definition through radical negativity, this cannot provide me with evidence of my uniqueness or particular identity; one nullity is indistinguishable from another. But all factors leading toward self-identification are themselves possibilities. Differently stated, only inauthentic temporality has actual content. Authentic temporality is a concatenation of possibilities. Merleau-Ponty is right to insist that the present is the place in which we decide, that is, choose resolutely.[6] And the present is defined by presences or actualities, not by vacancies waiting to

be filled. Or rather, the vacancies are themselves present within the temporal present, and we fill them with the assistance of what we already are.

I want to make one more critical remark. If the present is defined by the past and the future, the future by the past and the present, and the past by the present and the future, then we seem to have returned to Bergson's *durée*, in which no element of temporality is external to the others, and which Heidegger contemptuously dismisses. Surely the ecstatic unity of past, present, and future is itself visible within the present, not as an object of perception and not as possibility or *Seinkönnen*, but as the ontological sense of time. If this sense is itself temporal, not only will it pass away like any temporal event, but the question arises as to how it can be conceived as an actual truth for the present epoch of historicity. Is not possibility higher than actuality? In sum: to say that the present is a possibility is to say either that it is not experienced as actual, or else that our awareness of that possibility is grounded in an extra-temporal sense of presence.

I hope that I have presented enough evidence (and please note the two key terms "presented" and "evidence") to show the inadequacy of Heidegger's account of the present. In bringing this talk to a close, I want to suggest that the problem lies in his derivation of care from temporality. My thesis, which I can of course only indicate here, is that the better procedure is to derive temporality from care. I also prefer the Platonic term "erōs" to *Sorge*, which to my ears has a heavily Teutonic sound that muffles much of the richness and playfulness of human existence.

The general problem that concerns us is the coherence of the lived present. How do we experience the present as a series of past and future moments, if there is no part of that series that corresponds to the present itself? It is relatively easy to define the future as the not yet and the past as the no longer. But why is this easy? What is it that renders the distinction between past and future intelligible? The natural answer that springs to one's lips is surely that whatever else they may mean, "not yet" and "no longer" are two different ways of saying "not now." But "not now" is itself intelligible only if

we understand what it is to be "now." So the future and the past are privations of the present. The now stands to the not yet and the no longer as an actuality to distinct privations. The now is not absent but present; the present is now. We arrive at a circle. But is this surprising? If the now is primitive or fundamental, there is no reason why it should be definable in terms of something else, that is, in terms of some simpler constituent.

Of course, we can clarify or expand the circle. "Now" is a characteristic tense of temporal flow, but it cannot be defined exclusively through temporality. The tenses of time are intelligible only with respect to temporal events or content. If nothing happened, the past and the future would not merely be identical with the present, but the tripartition would be inaccessible. But this is not enough to resolve our problem. In fact, it simply poses the problem. For how can anything happen in the present? If time is continuous flow, the present happening flows away as it occurs. It is true that the flow of temporality is from the future into the past, and that this path goes through the present; but the flowing content does not pause for the present. The process of "going through" the present seems to take no time. For suppose it took time, let us say one second. In the first place, the second would itself be flowing, and therefore it would not be the now. Or else it would not flow, in which case it would not be temporal. A flowing second is not present for a second, but is continuously disappearing into the past as it emerges from the future. A static second cannot be measured as a unit of temporality, so temporal flow must be restricted to the past and the future. In other words, on this alternative, not only is time discontinuous, but it cannot be passing *now*.

We have to distinguish between time and the experience of time. I suggest that if we restrict ourselves to temporal flow, there is no way in which to grasp the present or now. The experience of the present is not accessible as a synthesis of passing moments, because this synthesis, as itself a temporal entity, is subject to the same disappearance into the past and emergence from the future as we just saw in the case of the isolated second or moment. If this is right, then our experience of the present must be produced by something

that is not just temporal flow, or the impression of temporal flow, or a construction of flowing temporal moments. Something other than time must produce the experience of the present.

This statement can be generalized. Time is not a substance, an entity, an independent object of perception analogous to a physical body or cognitive experience. We do not perceive time as we do flowers, trees, persons, the starry sky, and so on. But neither do we perceive time as a property of an individual event or perception, in the way that we perceive the color of a flower as red. Furthermore, we don't perceive individual events or things as totally independent. Perception or cognition is itself an event within a process, which we call variously consciousness, experience, awareness, or apperception. We perceive a flower as present in a field, blowing in the wind, exuding a distinctive odor, attracting insects, and so on. The field, the wind, the odor, and the insects are each part of the background to the perception of the flower, and this background in turn is not static but is an ingredient in our experience. For example, we distinguish the field from the nearby buildings, the wind as changing direction, rising and falling, and so too with each aspect of the general segment of the environment to which we turn our attention. "Turning one's attention" is in other words not a single static and independent event, but a process of our openness to the whole. This openness is not like standing still and peering through an aperture at a motionless object. It is a process that takes place as a well-ordering of before and after, in which our attention shifts from one discernible aspect of the process to another. The accessibility of the entire process to our perceptual and cognitive awareness is an integrated set of changes through which we proceed cognitively, focusing on this or that event or object, but always within a horizon of awareness that is itself graded in various changing zones of precision.

Only now are we in a position to say something about the experience of time. I don't watch time passing; I see the wind starting and stopping, insects coming and going, flowers moving and standing still; I see myself moving from one destination to another, the sky lighting up and darkening, my thoughts changing

in a variety of ways, some of them ordered and some not, and all of these events are related or relatable to one another in a unity of consciousness that I interpret reflexively as my experience, but not of a "me" that is isolated from everything else. My experience is experience of the unity of possible and actual experiences, that is, of the world as available for experience. I can insert my well-ordering of experiences of before and after into a more general framework that includes your well-ordering of experiences, and this framework is public or clock time. This can itself be inserted into a conceptual generalization, defined by natural processes such as the motion of the stars or, at the other end of the spectrum, by atomic decay, but our experience of this time is attenuated. We experience cosmological time only through the experiencing of before and after of small-scale phenomena such as the position of the dial of a chronometer or some process in a laboratory.

Now let us move in the other direction, from clock-time to individual temporality. Just as we do not directly experience cosmological time, so too we do not directly experience clock-time, or what we can call rather awkwardly "local public time." If I feel that time is passing while I type this lecture, it is because my muscles are getting tired, my attention is wandering, I feel the pangs of hunger, and so on. I glance at my wrist-watch, go back to typing, vaguely aware that it is taking time, look at my watch again, and in this way I fit the act of typing the lecture into an intentional sequence of events: my schedule for the day. And this schedule is part of my schedule for the week, which in turn is a unit in my plans for the semester, and so on outward, as far as I have made any plans for my life.

I can sit in my chair and meditate on the passage of time, but there is no substance or entity called "time" about which I am thinking. What I am thinking about is a set of processes, marked by before and after, which set is thinkable only because it is made up of events that can themselves be cognized, such as my hair turning grey, my teeth falling out, my knees aching, my children growing up, the house beginning to rot, and so on and so forth. I can focus on any one or several of these processes, or I can represent them in general as me getting older, or still more generally as the passage of time.

But in no case is time walking through the room, or moving along inexorably, side by side with the processes I have mentioned. Nor is it like a screen or filter, through which the processes are secreted in such a way as to constitute my experience.

I can also experience any one, several, or all of these processes as occurring at different rates. I may feel myself to be aging rapidly or slowly, depending upon how old I am, how I feel, with whom I am comparing myself, and so on. Any single experience may seem to be instantaneous, dragging on endlessly, or moving along at a good pace. I might suppose that there are multiple time-streams, all of them set at different and even varying speeds, but it soon becomes impossible to account for the unity of my life on this hypothesis. The reason why I can perceive events as quick or slow, dragging on or disappearing, and the like, is because I measure them against a standard perception of time, namely, my accumulated sense of who I am, how old I am, the circumstances of my life, and so how my life fits into the pace of the world.

In other words, I measure what I will call subjective time-rates with respect to my general sense of public or clock-time, a general sense that is modifiable by various factors but not dissolvable into them. And this in turn is possible because it is the nature of human experience to occur in accord with what I shall call "standard" rates of change. These standards are of course experienced, but with respect to the different kinds of things, events, and processes that make up our lives. I know directly how fast my inner awareness should move, and what constitutes a "speeding up" or "slowing down" because of excitement, fear, illness, or hallucination. Equally important, "how fast," "too fast," and "too slow" are themselves rendered intelligible because they are measured with respect to perceptions and cognitions of things, relations, and events that have stable identities, whether or not they are themselves moving spatially and temporally.

From considerations of this sort, I infer that the experience of time is a function of changes and motions, which in turn are the necessary consequence of the sequential nature of life. Still more generally, in order for anything at all to exist, it must be "spread out" or possess

dimensionality, that is, it must have a series of aspects or parts that are arranged in a well-ordering that constitutes the identity of that thing, and which is perceived through a movement of awareness from one aspect to another. Perception is therefore dual in nature. It is true that I do not perceive, say, a rose as a static item in a frozen or even vacuous universe. My perception of the rose is an integration of the relevant sensations, together with various concepts about the flower, plants, filling up space, moving in the wind, and so on. But the items that are integrated are themselves identifiable as a rose, a flower, a petal, a color, and these identities are not temporal events like a second, a minute, or an hour. They are the fixed points that articulate into an intelligible structure the set of changes constituting my experience, into a well-ordering of before and after. More generally, I don't perceive anything as something of a certain sort except on the basis of an awareness of the categorial structure of existence, through which I relate items of various kinds into objects and events of various sorts.

I suggest that our experience of time is constructed from the steps by which our awareness develops into an openness to the totality of life as an ongoing process of many levels, all of them integrated into a self-differentiating unity, to borrow an expression from Plato that is applied to eros in the *Symposium* (187a5). And that is why I reverse Heidegger's thesis that temporality is the ground of care. Heidegger cannot be right, because without care, intentionality, or eros, there would be no human experience of time. The flow of primordial temporality would not possess inner articulation, directedness, or what one could call an interpretation of change into a paradigm of before and after. But then it would be impossible to refer to this primordial flow as human temporality.

I further suggest that our experience of the lived present is at bottom the spontaneous manifestation of consciousness that Kant seems to have in mind by the expression "synthetic unity of apperception." This unity is spontaneous in the sense that it cannot be derived from or reduced to the corporeal or neurophysiological conditions of its manifestation, or from a miraculous creation by a higher intelligence, or out of any simpler or more fundamental stratum,

whether empirical or ontological. But more important in the present context is the fact that each of us defines the lived present on the basis of our intentional or (in Kant's term) purposive awareness of a focus of attention. And this means that *something is present*. Contrary to the critics of *parousia* and the champions of decentering and *différance,* presence is the non-temporal foundation of the temporal present.

The mistake made by the enemies of presence is that they all start from the primacy of the flow of consciousness. In other words, they begin with the assumption of the primordiality of temporal flow and then explain the constitution of beings (in all senses of that term) as though they were rates of change of sub-currents of that stream of temporal flow. But the resultant explanations are all of temporal items. The beings are constituted by a flow that is already passing away or not yet in existence. Otherwise put, the structural elements of temporal beings are themselves temporal beings, as we saw previously in the case of Husserl and Heidegger. The puzzle of deriving the present from the past and the future is thus relocated at the heart of the structures that are supposed to account for human temporality itself.

Our experience of the present is "specious" only in the sense that it cannot be measured by public or clock time. This is because it is not a unit of temporal flow. It is rather the point of organization for all experience of temporal flow. And the organization of that flow, as I have now tried to explain, is a synthesis of a multiplicity of rates of change, each of which is grounded in it own set of characteristic identities, together with a lived awareness of how fast life proceeds under various psychic attunements. This awareness in turn is the synthetic unity of temporal apperception. Plato's *erōs* is thus not so different from Kant's synthetic unity of apperception, once we see that the latter cannot produce human experience merely through the opening of a unified field of consciousness. That "openness" must be ordered by desire at the very outset of conscious life. If it is not, we may be unified, but we are nowhere. Nowhere, however, is where we would be, if it were true that temporality were the ground of apperception.

To conclude, the connection between political existence and time should now be evident. Politics takes time, but it takes it from eros.

Notes

1 I say "seem to" because the agreement is made contingent upon the correctness of the claim of Hippocrates that we cannot understand the soul apart from the body. There is also a question about the manuscript readings. B reads *logou* and T, W read *holou* at 270c2. Burnet follows the latter.
2 See *Metaphysics in Ordinary Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999; Reprint: South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2004), chapter two.
3 *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1977), paragraph 65 (pp. 323–30). Numbers in parentheses in the text refer to this edition.
4 *Ibid.*, paragraphs 67–68.
5 The concern in question is *Besorgen* or inauthentic *Sorge*; see page 337 *inter alia*.
6 *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. Colin Smith (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London: 1962), p. 427.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Freedom and Spontaneity

I

In ordinary usage, spontaneity refers to an absence of explicit intention. We say that someone acts spontaneously if the decision is made "on the spot," without a deliberate weighing of circumstances or examination of possible outcomes. An event is said to be spontaneous if its participants did not plan its occurrence in advance, or if the immediate causes are not directly identifiable. These and other related senses of spontaneity leave open the possibility of a deeper analysis in order to determine the underlying or even the unconscious causes of the act or event. In many if not most cases of human action, however, we call an act spontaneous if, despite the possibility of determining the general causes for the capacity to act in such a way, it is evident that the act could not have been predicted.

If a person acts spontaneously, then we would normally say that he or she was free to act in that way. It might be the case, of course, that after further analysis, we find that what seemed to us to be spontaneous behavior was in fact compelled by some set of circumstances. In this case, however, we would see that we erred in our original judgment, and we would no longer call the action spontaneous. Spontaneous acts are free in the sense that they might or might not occur. An element of chance is involved; had circumstances been otherwise, the event or the action would not have transpired, and the circumstances *could* have been otherwise. Or so it must seem to us, if we are to employ the word "spontaneous" legitimately.

The freedom required for spontaneous behavior is related to a lack of advance deliberation on the one hand and to chance on the other. This is clearly not the honorific sense of freedom that plays a central role in our reflections on the good life, and even further on the highest good. It would be closer to the truth to say that freedom

in this sense refers to the capacity to deliberate in advance of action and hence to become oneself the cause of the action intended.

There are of course levels of complexity in our everyday understanding of freedom as a high, or perhaps as the highest good. Some persons believe that the highest good is "to be free to do whatever I want." We would normally say that such persons are not free in the honorific sense but are instead at best acting spontaneously and at worst prisoners of their immediate desires. It is important to note here that when spontaneity is elevated into a first principle of human conduct, it becomes indistinguishable from slavery and debasement of the human into the bestial. Spontaneous persons in this sense are slaves to their impulses.

In order to regard ourselves as genuinely free, in other words, we believe that we must be in a position to deliberate about the relative desirability of alternative courses of action, and furthermore that we play the determining role in the initiation of our chosen acts. But we can neither deliberate about relative desirability nor initiate the desired alternative unless there is a reliable orderliness and stability in the scheme of things. If the world is a discontinuous sequence of spontaneous events, then our actions can be at best spontaneous but never free. On the other hand, the continuity of experience or regularity of nature must not only be accessible to our understanding; it necessarily restricts our actions as well as making possible their free initiation.

The most elementary reflection on freedom thus shows us its inseparability from rational order, and therefore from restriction. Freedom is possible, and indeed, intelligible, only in conjunction with necessity. Some lines of action are closed to us because of necessity; we are ordained to act in such-and-such a way, under existing circumstances. The qualifying phrase leaves open the possibility that it is in our power to change some circumstances. We are in fact free to attempt to change whichever circumstances we wish, but only because of the aforementioned orderliness or stable regularity in nature, including human nature. The same order that determines us in some ways is the condition for our freedom in other ways.

Let us now ask: in which ways are we free rather than determined? We can approach this question by considering the extreme case. Suppose it were within our power entirely to dissolve the natural order and regularity of experience that hinders our freedom to act as we see fit. It is obvious that such a dissolution would eliminate human life altogether. Human beings can never be entirely free, if by "entirely" is meant free from every conceivable restriction. No one could seriously desire freedom in this sense, since it is equivalent to the immediate cancellation of freedom. We do of course speak of freeing ourselves from the burdens of human existence by death, but this is a choice between the lesser of two evils, not of the highest good or condition for the good life.

All descriptions of modern science as the instrument by which to make mankind the "masters and possessors of nature" must therefore be understood as valid if and only if nature is preserved as a rational, reliable order that restricts even while it permits or frees us to act in accord with our intentions. A master must be the master of something of a determinate nature in order to exercise authority or freedom. Otherwise put, the dialectic of master and slave exists even at the level of the natural order in the sense that this expression is used by modern science. The master rules only by an accommodation of human action to the necessity imposed by nature.

We will have to come back to this question of natural necessity, and so to the question of whether human beings are slaves rather than masters. But the question cannot be sensibly addressed until we take another step in our reflection on the everyday or prephilosophical situation. I spoke a moment ago of freedom in the honorific sense. We can now illustrate what this means with an example involving modern science. It is today evident that human beings have the capacity to fly to the moon; despite or because of the natural order, we are free to do so and as everyone knows, we have already done it.

I want to underline the point, obvious though it may be, that this freedom to fly to the moon did not arise from the abolition of natural necessity but from understanding its laws and acting in accordance with them. More important for my present purposes, however,

is the fact that freedom in the honorific sense of the good, or the condition for the pursuit of the good, does not refer to the physical act of flying to the moon but to the process of deliberation and the decision to act that initiated the flight to the moon. It was first necessary to decide that flying to the moon is desirable, and hence good.

Stated somewhat more generally, the conquest of nature has been undertaken, not as an end in itself but as an instrument for the fulfillment of human desires of varying kinds, including the desire to know for the sake of knowing. This latter desire, incidentally, soon gives rise to other desires; one might simply wish to know the laws of flight without desiring to fly, but once those laws are known, the desire to fly will arise and make use of that knowledge in order to accomplish its intentions. Whereas it may be possible to distinguish theory from practice in theory, in practice, such a distinction is impossible. Human beings have a natural tendency to do what they are able to do, so long as they believe that action will not result in certain disaster. And sometimes they will act even though they know that they will themselves be destroyed by so acting.

I now want to draw some conclusions from this preliminary discussion of freedom. Freedom in the honorific sense is neither entirely theoretical nor entirely practical. It has to do finally with the totality if not quite the unity of human life. But the necessary restrictions of rationality and order upon which freedom depends make it impossible to say that the good life is the unqualifiedly free life. We therefore normally define a free life as one that is conducted under circumstances that permit deliberation on the goodness or badness of acts that are within our power. In many cases, we cannot decide whether an act is in our power until we attempt it. But often if not always we can also deliberate about whether it would be good or bad to acquire the power to perform the act in question.

Freedom in the honorific sense, as it is widely understood in everyday life, refers then to deliberation on the goodness and badness of acting upon individual desires, and thus to an order of ends or purposes by which we agree to order our lives. It refers fundamentally to the moral and political spheres of human life. One does not have to be a philosopher or a scientist in order to understand

that there are limitations on our capacity to act, and even on our freedom to deliberate as well as to choose how to act. We can make serious mistakes about these limitations, but the reason why we know we have erred is because we can distinguish between error and success.

Otherwise put, and all philosophical doctrines to one side, we know that we act in accordance with ends, that we are free to deliberate upon the choice of means to those ends, and that we regard this freedom as the highest human good or at least as an indispensable element in that good. We know this because we know what it is to be deprived of that freedom. It is this knowledge that renders intelligible the claims of certain persons that we are in fact not free at all, but that freedom is an illusion.

One last conclusion here. There is an enormous difference between the contention that what looks like free choice is actually determined by natural necessity, whether in the form of the laws of motion or of unconscious behavior, and the contention that the difference between a free society and a tyranny, or between a good and an evil person, is an illusion. Even determinists, including those who believe themselves to be computers, prefer open to closed societies, just as they prefer to associate with persons whom they trust rather than with liars, thieves, and tyrants.

Otherwise put, determinists argue with their opponents and attempt to persuade them of the truth of determinism by rational deliberation; they do not sit back and wait for the inevitable operation of necessity. If determinism is true, then it must always have been true; yet many, and perhaps even most people, do not believe it. It therefore looks as though we are not determined to be determinists, or that we are free not to be.

One might object that those who reject determinism are simply mistaken, and that this error was itself determined. My point, however, is not that determinism is false at the level of macro- or micro-physics, but that there is a difference between these two levels and the level of human existence.

Human existence cannot be reduced to the level of physics; such a reduction destroys the phenomena rather than explaining them.

We are free to reject determinism at the level of human activity, and in fact, it is easy to see that most physical determinists do so as well. Since determinists agree with non-determinists in preferring freedom to bondage and good to evil, their own contention that freedom is an illusion is not very persuasive. If human existence is an illusion, it does not follow that the extirpation of the illusion is either necessary or desirable. I would prefer to say that the distinction between *praxis* and physics shows us, not that human activity is an illusion, but that it is illusory to seek clarification of *praxis* from the study of physics. This point requires further development, to which I now turn.

II

Since the very structure of everyday life is defined by the distinction between freedom and necessity on the one hand, and freedom and spontaneity on the other, a denial of freedom must be an assertion of either comprehensive determinism or radical spontaneity; this is equivalent to the assertion that human existence as a whole is an illusion. Is this assertion plausible? One might suppose that it must be, since the first or deterministic version of the assertion is widely associated with, and supported by appeals to, modern natural science, whereas the second version or the assertion of spontaneity is the key premise of the now omnipresent postmodernist thought.

I want to begin by saying that it has recently become fashionable to attack the question of free will versus determinism by means of subtle and complicated arguments based upon quantum mechanics and the associated principle of indeterminacy. This does not seem to me to be the best way to proceed because it rests upon the assumption, common to proponents of artificial intelligence who regard consciousness as an illusion, that mental and spiritual events are reducible to the motions of the body. One cannot defend freedom by the argument that the motions of matter are indeterminate. If the indeterminateness arises from the nature of cognition, or in other words mental activity, then it makes no sense to refer to such activity as an illusion. If on the other hand the indeterminateness is a

fact of the material universe, this has no bearing upon the facts of subjectivity or the mental and spiritual universe.

There is then no reason to refer to arcane branches of natural science, or for that matter to metamathematical theorems like those of Gödel, in considering the assertion that life is an illusion. Strange as it may sound to the advanced theorist, the nub of the matter lies entirely in the everyday world. This does not mean that reflections on science and mathematics are superfluous. To the contrary, one should reflect upon these as activities that originate within, and derive their significance from, everyday life. Nor is there the slightest reason to have recourse to the surrealist counterfactual examples of the modal metaphysician in the present investigation. The question is not what we can imagine might be the case, but what is the case.

Let me repeat this simple but usually overlooked point. What is at issue here is not the inner structure or essence of everyday experience, as that structure is uncovered by depth psychology, particle physics, cosmology, or metaphysics of any form whatsoever. The issue is rather what reason there is to believe that these so-called inner structures cast any light upon everyday experience, in other words, upon the experience of conscious human beings whose daily lot is defined by the tripartite structure of freedom, determinism, and spontaneity. If for example Freudian psychoanalytical theory casts light upon the acts of everyday life, it does so in order to expand the horizon of freedom by uncovering the causes of undesirable compelled behavior. The analogy here is with mathematical and experimental physics, which discovers the laws of motion, force, gravitation, and so on, thanks to which knowledge we are enabled to expand our power to act by the construction of the appropriate technology.

When I learn the laws of mechanics, I do not accordingly acquire the power to predict where my body will be located at every subsequent instance of its existence, because the relevant motions that will effect the positions of my body are far too numerous to be calculated. But even if I could carry out all of these calculations, why should I assume that I am not free to alter some of those motions,

thereby falsifying the predictions of my future locations? Just as the laws of the unconscious are accessible to us only through the conscious activity of the human spirit, which is free to act upon the knowledge of those laws, so too with the laws of physics. The attempt to reduce the mind to the body, or to treat consciousness as an illusion, is not based upon knowledge of physics. It is rather a gratuitous metaphysical assumption, even when decked out in abstruse technical terminology.

Metaphysical assumptions, whether or not supported by scientific rhetoric, cannot define the facts of experience. I know that I am conscious, not through some subtle epistemological argument, but by the fact of consciousness. In this sense, the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum* is irrefutable, not because it expresses in succinct form a valid argument, but because it exhibits the necessary precondition of all argumentation. To call the *cogito* a valid argument is to imply that it would become unsound if we discovered its premise to be false. But the premise cannot be discovered to be false, since that discovery, which could only be made by an existing thinking being, would confirm it.

To take a slightly different example, I know that I am not a computer, first, because the brain is an organism, not a machine; second, because logic, or more comprehensively, mathematics, cannot be reduced to an algorithm; thirdly, because thinking is not reducible to logic or mathematics; and from the standpoint of the present lecture most important of all, because consciousness is not reducible to thinking. To say this in another way, computers do not program themselves, whereas human beings come equipped with the organic version of software. Human desire is defined by the combination of, and so the difference between, the needs of the body and the striving of the spirit. If science is fidelity to the phenomena, then paradoxical as it sounds, religious or metaphysical dualism is more scientific than modern monistic materialism. There is no question whatsoever that the phenomena of organic existence, as for example, the modification of cognitive processes by sexual desire, in no way resemble the behavior of computers, however powerful. Machines don't have the right kinds of bodies

to think or to have conscious experience identical with that of human beings.

Others have discussed the details of what are here given as very general arguments. But these discussions do not always, or perhaps even often, draw the radical conclusion that I wish to defend. I deny the rationality of all forms of reduction from one type of experience to another. Not only is it absurd to refer to ordinary experience or everyday life as a falsifiable theory; to the contrary, theories depend upon ordinary experience and can never refute it. They can of course clarify, or attempt to clarify, ordinary experience, as is done by mathematical logic, nuclear physics, cosmology, Freudian psychoanalysis, Keynesian economics, Marxist philosophies of history, and even astrology and necromancy. But clarification is neither refutation nor reduction to something else.

Thus far I have argued that there is no scientific evidence to establish the illusory nature of consciousness or more fundamentally of human existence. To speak of an illusion in this case is meaningless, since what we mean by an illusion is defined with respect to everyday consciousness as the arena of public experience. Illusions are undergone only by conscious beings who are in principle capable of distinguishing between illusion and reality.

More precisely, human existence is defined as rational deliberation about the order of ends and means to those ends, which deliberation in turn depends upon knowledge of the regularity of nature, and so too of the possession of natures by the beings that constitute our world. But deliberation just is consciousness of alternatives. Those who deny the fact of consciousness, or who fear that it is an illusion, are not able to explain to us or to themselves what it is that they deny or fear, except upon the assumption of the reality of conscious denials and fears.

Analogous considerations apply with respect to freedom. I may not always be free when I think that I am, but I can know myself to be mistaken only by contrast to those instances in which I am right about my freedom to choose. The most fundamental proof of freedom is its deprivation. The tyrant makes the nature of freedom unmistakable by preventing me from acting in accord with my

considered wishes. It makes no difference whether he is compelled to do so by subconscious or even unconscious motivations; I continue to understand what it would be to enjoy freedom. As to arguments from physics or neurophysiology, they are entirely spurious. As soon as I know what are the forces that interfere with my freedom, I am free to attempt to modify them. Those who philosophize by counter-example are thus demonstrating their own freedom, even when they attempt to defend determinism.

I turn now to the argument on behalf of spontaneity. In ordinary usage, as we recall, a spontaneous event, of which human actions form a subset, seems to occur without advance planning or through a chance combination of causes. From the standpoint of determinism, spontaneity is an illusion. All acts are unplanned in the sense that they are caused by the motions of bodies or by the laws of psychological behavior, which in turn has its roots in neurophysiology. To this it could be replied that all human acts are spontaneous if they occur, not by our intention but by what are essentially random distributions of energy. As Nietzsche maintained, human existence is a contingent epiphenomenon of accumulations and discharges of energy, or as the same point was expressed by the classical materialists, life occurs through the random and purposeless collisions of atoms in the void. What looks to us, within the concatenations of atoms, like necessity is in fact chance.

The identification of necessity with chance during the late modern period is in my opinion an unintended consequence of the Kantian philosophy. According to Kant, cognition is spontaneous in the sense that the concepts, categories, and rules by which we think a rational world, as well as the forms of pure intuition, namely, space and time, that underlie sense-perception, are furnished exclusively by the activity of perceptual and cognitive thought itself. Stated with excessive simplicity, things in themselves are unknowable; they impinge onto our sensory and conceptual apparatus in such a way as to arouse sensations which are then constituted into objects of perception and knowledge by the conceptual machinery of the intellect.

In short, Kant's thesis amounts to the contention that necessary order is identical with intelligible structure, which in turn is a

spontaneous manifestation of necessity. Kant was unable to prove that the concepts, categories, and rules of world-constitution are necessarily those which he identified. To mention only the notorious cases, Aristotelian logic, Euclidean geometry, and Newtonian mechanics were all either replaced or supplemented by non-Aristotelian logic, non-Euclidean geometry, and non-Newtonian mechanics. What seemed to be the progressive revision of the inner structure of necessity led eventually, and sooner rather than later, to the widespread belief that necessity is an illusory or historical interpretation of chance. In the language of modal logic, necessity is possible but not itself necessary.

Kant's doctrine of spontaneity was motivated by the desire to preserve human freedom rather than to reduce it to chance. If the necessary order of the intelligible world is a product of rational thought, then freedom may be assigned to the domain of things in themselves, which, since they cannot be known, are not subject to the laws of causality. There are numerous difficulties with this doctrine, including the unintelligible fact that human acts, although presumably free as occasioned within the so-called noumenal domain of things in themselves, nevertheless occur in the domain of phenomenal necessity. One should also mention that Kant never claims to demonstrate human freedom; he merely points to the noumenal domain as a possible location of freedom.

For my present purposes, a detailed analysis of Kant's philosophy is superfluous. The crucial point here is that Kant inadvertently gave the decisive impetus to the development of modern subjectivism. The claim that natural order is a spontaneous world-constituting activity of what Kant called the transcendental ego was soon transformed into the thesis that the ego is itself a historical creation. History is then just another name for the illusory character of human existence, which in fact is an epiphenomenon of the random perturbations on the surface of chaos. The line of development from Kant to Nietzsche, and so to postmodernism, is much shorter and more direct than is often realized.

It is striking to note that contemporary doctrines of perspectivism and the radical uniqueness of interpretation are a deteriorated

consequence of the Kantian revision of the early modern scientific doctrine of the distinction between primary and secondary attributes. Seventeenth Century philosophers, decisively influenced by the new physics, distinguished between natural properties like number, geometrical shape, and motion on the one hand, and properties of perceived beings, including human beings, in the subjective world of everyday life. Modern science is linked from its very inception to the thesis that human life is an illusion. By making the so-called primary attributes themselves into products of the spontaneity of cognition, Kant prepared the way for the deterioration of primary into secondary attributes. This deterioration culminates in Nietzsche, for whom all properties are attributes of an intrinsic chaos.

Reduced to the bare minimum, this is the historical background to the late-modern, and so postmodern, emancipation of spontaneity. Needless to say, spontaneity is now identified as freedom, whereas in Kant, it was the source of necessity. In accord with the new dogma, if to be is to be interpreted, we are all free to be whatever we wish. But this freedom is entirely illusory, since it is the spontaneous result of uncountable random concatenations of what we may call, borrowing an expression from Leibniz, *petites perceptions*. Whereas Leibniz assigned these perceptions to a point of unity, which he called a monad, corresponding to the individual human soul, in the Nietzschean and postmodern doctrine the soul is itself a random concatenation of "small perceptions," which in turn are random concatenations of the accumulation and discharge of force, or of what is today called "difference."

Kant attempted to defend human freedom by preserving a distinction between the unknowable but thinkable domain of the soul as *noumenon* and the knowable domain of phenomenal necessity. By making the soul unknowable and necessity spontaneous, he encouraged both the doctrine of radical historicism and the view that the soul is not merely unknowable but imaginary. Otherwise stated, he contributed to the development of the twin theses that order is a matter of subjective interpretation and that freedom is an illusion. The Nietzschean attempt to deconstruct the subject is the necessary

consequence of these two theses. Spontaneity and necessity turn out to be two different names, or superficially different interpretations, of the same conclusion. I began this lecture by making some commonsensical distinctions, based upon everyday linguistic use, of three related concepts: freedom, determinism, and spontaneity. We have now seen that these distinctions hold good only within the domain of everyday discourse and the philosophical doctrines that take their bearings by everyday life. The distinctions can no longer be maintained as soon as we reject everyday life, or what contemporary philosophers often call "the given," on behalf either of scientific materialism or the various forms of idealism that arose in an attempt to preserve the integrity and significance of human life without sacrificing modern science.

Idealism is not a satisfactory alternative to materialism because it defines itself on the basis of a reversal of the same reductivism that renders materialism useless as a philosophical account of human existence. The late-modern attempt to deconstruct both idealism and materialism, as well as the modern doctrine of subjectivity, has shown itself to be incapable of freeing itself from idealist and materialist presuppositions. Whether we begin with early- or late-modern attacks on the given, the result is the same: the celebration of chaos. If philosophy is to be rehabilitated, it will have to return to its origin, not in Being or *différance*, and certainly not in the methodology of modern science, but in everyday life. The Husserlian doctrine of the *Lebenswelt* is a well-intentioned but unsuccessful attempt to negotiate this return, unsuccessful because it remains within the Kantian version of the ideology of modern science. What is required is not phenomenology but *phronēsis*.

I want to close by underlining the fact that my analysis of the decline of freedom into the spontaneity of necessity is in no sense to be construed as anti-scientific. I do however reject some of the cardinal ideological theses that have been associated with modern science since its inception. My point is that science is irrelevant to the fact of freedom, to borrow another Kantian expression for my own purposes. Indeed, I regard myself as a champion rather than a critic of science, precisely because I reject absurd philosophical

interpretations of the implications of science. Science must take its bearings from the phenomena, and the phenomena are not established by reductions of one domain to another. Reduction conceals; it does not reveal.

In the same vein, I have to add that the ideological misappropriation of modern science is due in large measure to a common philosophical failing: the desire to give a reasoned account or to demonstrate the truth of one's interpretations. But there is no demonstration of the fact of freedom; if it could be demonstrated by logical argument, freedom would be transformed into determinism. Similarly, the attempt to prove that life is an illusion always begins by taking life with excessive seriousness, namely, as a residue of unsatisfactory efforts to arrive at certitude about the nature of things, a residue that necessarily obscures all certitude. But life is, although hardly an illusion, not so substantial as to conceal every vestige of the truth. Perhaps the frivolousness of quotidian existence reveals more of the truth than the excessive seriousness or quest for certitude that leads inevitably to the rejection of truth, and so to the famous neuroses of late modernity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Remarks on Amartya Sen

As I did not receive a copy of Professor Sen's lecture, I have prepared my remarks on the basis of three of his essays: "Behavior and the Concept of Preference," "Choice, Orderings and Morality," and "Rational Fools."[1] The essays are precise, dense, and elegant. I see little to be gained by my presenting a less precise, less dense, and less elegant summary of their contents. Sometimes a commentator can earn his fee (or in this case, a luncheon) by mounting a spirited attack on the main doctrines of the featured speaker, or by challenging the validity of his argumentation. That will not be possible this morning, since I have found little in these essays with which to disagree. On the contrary, I admire and indeed am grateful for Professor Sen's critique of the prevalent conceptions of rationality in economic theory. I will restrict my commentary to a few remarks intended to supplement that critique, and will close with a question or two for Professor Sen's consideration.

The conceptions of rationality that we both find to be inadequate are that of consistency of choice and the possibility of justifying each act in terms of self-interest (104). Consistency, of course, is a property of formal systems, and as such is compatible with a wide range of theoretical alternatives about human nature. Walt Whitman to the contrary notwithstanding, most of us do not exult in self-contradiction, and in the sober precinct within which philosophy and economics intersect, we may welcome consistency as a property of rationality without restricting the one to the other.

The question of self-interest seems to me to be more complicated. I begin with the ambiguous status of the self in contemporary philosophy. The ambiguity does not stem simply from the postmodernist followers of Nietzsche. One has only to think of recent work in the philosophy of the cognitive sciences, to say nothing of the less formal descendants of Humean empiricism, to recognize

the widespread conviction today that the "self" is an ambiguous concept, and even an illusion. No doubt economists are less speculative than philosophers, and they do seem to retain what many philosophers today would call the "folk-psychological" belief in the integrity of the self. At least they must do so if talk of self-interest is to have any validity.

The word "self" is intrinsically neutral and can be applied to anything at all, for example to a table or a chair. But we would hardly speak of the "interests of tables or chairs." It is, I believe, important to note that we do not normally use the expression "the self" to refer to any self but our own. The definite article "the" is here an honorific, and indicates that we are interested above all others in the human self. A self that is capable of interests, and so of being interested, among other things, in itself, is said to possess self-consciousness. A satisfactory analysis of self-interest must therefore take into account the difference between self-conscious and unself-conscious selves; or perhaps more accurately, it must begin with a model of human nature that derives from and is faithful to our everyday experience of our*selves*. It is the *dramatis personae* of this experience that express and pursue interests, and in particular, the interests that are of special interest to economists. From this standpoint, so-called "folk psychology" is more rational than the science of neurophysiology or the conceptual paradoxes of Humean empiricism.

In order that I not be misunderstood, let me say that the use of mathematical tools of analysis as well as the standard methods of the empirical sciences are not as such incompatible with adherence to "commonsense" or everyday views on human nature. I also lack the space to discuss in detail the various ambiguities of concepts like "common sense" or "everyday understanding." On another occasion I would want to argue that the purpose and value, indeed, the very rationality, of mathematical and experimental science itself derives from rationality in the commonsense or everyday sense of the term. It must suffice here to say that this sense is already presupposed by the expression "self-interest." When we attribute interests to selves, we do not do so simply on the basis of a behavioristic restriction to observed acts, but at a

deeper if not always articulated level, these attributions derive their sense and their ostensible validity from our consciousness of our own motives. There is no such thing as an entirely neutral phenomenological description of a preference-expressing act. In order to distinguish an act from a mechanical motion, one must already know what it is to act, and this knowledge comes from within, not from the external observation of our own acts. As Professor Sen wisely says, we tend to exaggerate the difficulty of introspection and communication (72).

That said, I go on to note that the philosophical roots of the economic presuppositions about rationality derive from the Galilean distinction between primary and secondary attributes and the modern celebration of mathematical physics as the highest paradigm of rationality. The last consequence of these assumptions is that human life as we actually live it is not simply irrational but is in fact an illusion. Once again I have to condense a complicated story into a phrase or two. If reality is restricted to number, figure, motion, and extension, then of course life as we actually live it is unreal or illusory. This illusoriness must extend to values, preferences, choices, or acts that are rooted in everyday experience.

One consequence is that our desire to attain a scientific understanding of reality, and in particular of human reality, cannot be scientifically described as good. More fundamentally, this way of looking at things is based upon the assumption that there is no rational connection between truth and goodness. There is no scientific, and hence no rational, way in which to assert the goodness of science. On the contrary, the problem arises directly as to whether it is not better to be unreasonable and to persist in our illusion as to the nature of human existence, even if it should be necessary to restrict or perhaps to abolish science. But the fact that the problem arises is a strong sign that life is not an illusion, or let us say that we have not thought through with sufficient rigor the distinction between illusion and reality. It is our ostensibly illusory persona that comes to question its insubstantial nature, and at the risk of melodrama, I would say that the posing of the question is the deepest level of human reality.

I want to emphasize that nothing I have said is intended as a challenge to the utility or rationality of the scientific study of human behavior. What we are discussing today are the philosophical presuppositions of a genuinely rational human science. The particular question before us is "who is *homo oeconomicus*?" And still more precisely we ask: what kind of self is capable of having interests? Doesn't what we mean by "interests" shift with the changes in our understanding of the self? Are not the interests of the soul quite different from those of the *ego cogitans*, and are these in turn not different from the interests of the spirit, the subject, the *id*, and finally, the thoroughly exteriorized self?

We speak today of the mind-body problem, not the soul-body problem. Since in the older view the mind is a faculty of the soul, the abolition of the soul, or its transformation into the motions of the body, leads to the homelessness of the mind, or to its reduction to the motions of the body. So far as I am aware, however, not even strict materialists or behaviorists, and certainly not economic theoreticians, equate psychology with mechanics. To restrict myself to the school that Professor Sen criticizes, they apparently hold that human action has two components. The first is a blend of drives, passions, instincts, or desires, and the second is what we can call for convenience calculative intelligence. Economic agents calculate their interests as the satisfaction of desire, whereas economists calculate the actions, and hence the motives, by which the former strive to satisfy their desires. I note that these two types of calculation are not themselves desires. They are also different from one another in a way that corresponds crudely to the difference between theoretical and practical reason. Theoretical reason is very close to logic and mathematics. In order for mathematics to be applied to practice, we must perform some analogue to the separation by the physicist of the primary from the secondary attributes. When we are concerned with those features of practice that are analogous to the primary attributes of physics, this is an entirely reasonable procedure. It ceases to be reasonable when the mathematical abstraction is taken to be the actual human being whose interests, preferences, choices, and actions we are studying.

Let me try to make my point in a slightly different idiom. We must be in a position to interpret motions as belonging to different kinds, one of which is that of human actions. But actions or expressions of value-guided preferences, which we often describe generally as "intentions," are distinguishable from mechanical or biologically controlled motions, as well as from random or meaningless ones, only through an antecedent understanding of the motives of human beings, which understanding, although it is undoubtedly social, must begin from within ourselves. We do not identify acts or their motives by ourselves simply moving. The identification is of something as something, and the "as" property is not transparently exhibited by external behavior.

In these few remarks, I have been trying to support Professor Sen's position on rationality. To restate my main point, the economic theorists criticized by Professor Sen are unable to state a coherent account of "self-interest," because this concept is derived not from behaviorism, mechanism, or the mathematical and experimental sciences but from everyday life. It is impossible to say what constitutes my self-interest simply by observing and describing my motions. The behaviorist assumes that he knows what human beings are *really* like, but this means that he interprets human beings *as* this kind of creature rather than that kind. If what sustains the "as" in this case is an impoverished awareness of reality and human nature, then the sense of "interest" will be equally impoverished. I fail to see why poverty should count here as science.

I end with two questions for Professor Sen. The first has to do with the significance of the prisoner's dilemma, which appears frequently in his writings. As I understand the point of this dilemma or game played by two persons, there are situations in which we can act in our own self-interest if and only if we know in advance the strategy to be employed by the other player. Lacking that knowledge, and acting on the basis of what seems without it to be our selfish interest, we both lose, i.e., achieve an inferior result. My question is what this game teaches us. The most immediate lesson seems to be that if one wants to be selfish, or to pursue one's own self-interests as narrowly conceived, then in certain situations we need to know

the intentions of those with whom our welfare is linked. Otherwise put, under certain circumstances, it is in our selfish interests to pursue what is formally an unselfish strategy. And this in turn suggests that if the selfish persons are rational, where "rational" means "able to determine one's own self-interest," then the result is an endorsement of human sociality. My question is whether Professor Sen agrees that this is an unsatisfactory endorsement because it is based upon a too-narrow conception of rationality. Hypocrisy has its virtues, but surely it is not identical with virtue. To paraphrase Plato, even thieves must practice some form of justice among themselves, but this does not produce a virtuous society. I wonder whether Professor Sen does not himself regard as more significant than the so-called dilemma the empirical fact that many players of the game follow the unselfish strategy.

My second question has to do with his endorsement of the rank-ordering of rank-orderings. Briefly stated, Professor Sen says that it is too thin a basis for the understanding of moral judgment to speak of morality as a rank-ordering of the moral value of individual acts. We need rather a rank-ordering of possible rank-orderings of acts, or what he calls a meta-ranking. For example, some rankings of the moral worth of individual acts are themselves more moral than others. Furthermore, we rank actions by criteria other than those of morality, and these criteria in turn have a certain order of their own as well as an order with respect to our purely moral ranking. This at least is how I understand Professor Sen's suggestion. I was reminded of Isaiah Berlin's thesis on the simultaneous validity of conflicting values in any society, although in the papers I read, Professor Sen does not introduce notions of conflict so much as those of refinement of analysis or enrichment of structure. So I will simply ask him whether he had something like Berlin's doctrine in mind when he formulated his point about meta-rankings.

But whether he did or not, the more pressing question for me is as follows. Let us agree that human beings order their lives by multiple rankings of preference, whether moral or by some other sense of the term "preference." Thus the same act might occupy a different position in different rankings. We are nevertheless faced

with the problem of deciding which preference-ranking to apply in a given case. What is the basis by which we select the appropriate element from our meta-ranking? Is there some meta-meta-ranking of meta-rankings? Or do we have direct access to the link between pertinent meta-rankings and the nature of the judgment that is demanded by acts of a given sort? For example, if I am faced with a moral dilemma, how do I know that I ought not to apply a rank-ordering of acts based upon aesthetic considerations, or let us say those of economic self-interest? Is not the decision in this case precisely a moral decision? If it is, don't meta-rankings collapse into rankings? And if it is not, don't we generate an infinite regress?

This concludes my commentary.

Note

1 These remarks were delivered in response to Amartya Sen in the Theory and Description Seminar, Boston University, December 1997. The essays referred to comprise chapters two to four of Sen's *Choice, Welfare, and Measurement* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982; Reprint: Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997) [ed.].